

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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INTERVIEW OF: Captain Dave Thieman, USN  
Squadron Commander  
Submarine Squadron Three

Captain Neiderhauser, USN  
Squadron Commander  
Submarine Squadron Seven

EXAMINERS: Tom Roth-Roffy, Office of Marine Safety  
National Transportation Safety Board

Barry Strauch  
National Transportation Safety Board

1 P R O C E E D I N G

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Good morning. The time is  
3 about two minutes after nine o'clock on Monday, the  
4 18th of March and we're here to interview Captain Dave  
5 Thieman, Submarine Squadron --

6 CAPT. THIEMAN: Three.

7 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: -- three, Commanding  
8 Officer. My name is Tom Roth-Roffy. I'm with the  
9 National Transportation Safety Board, Office of Marine  
10 Safety. Joining me is Mr. Barry Strauch, also of the  
11 National Transportation Safety Board. Good morning,  
12 sir.

13 I'd like to go ahead at this time and turn  
14 the questioning off to Mr. Barry Strauch, who will  
15 start off this morning.

16 MR. STRAUCH: Captain, could you just walk us  
17 through your background, starting with your education  
18 and then your Navy career.

19 CAPT. THIEMAN: Sure. Okay, 1976 I graduated  
20 from the Naval Academy with a degree in Math and then  
21 went off to the Nuclear Pipeline. I finished that  
22 program and went to my first ship in April of 1978. I  
23 served on James Monroe Blue, out of Charleston, with  
24 flying to -- Scotland to do the deployment space. Did

1 six patrols on James Monroe Blue. Then went to the  
2 Naval Academy as an Accompanying Officer for two years.

3 Then after departing the school came out here and was  
4 an Engineer on the Bremerton. It's a six eighty-eight  
5 class.

6 I served a little over two and-a-half years  
7 there and then went to Norfolk, Virginia, was a  
8 Squadron Engineer for about three years for six eighty-  
9 eight there, Squadron Eight. So there I was involved  
10 in both the operating boats as well as I had some boats  
11 in overhaul in Norfolk Naval and then we had the --  
12 response for the new construction ships up in Newport  
13 News. So they're training certifications.

14 After that, I went to Exhill Albany, which  
15 was an -- construction. I got there just before an  
16 initial criticality, took it through commissioning,  
17 shake-down ops and then post-shipyard availability and  
18 then brought on to Sea Charles and then got relieved.

19 I went off to the PCO Pipeline shortly  
20 thereafter, was out here and had command of Helena.  
21 She operated -- Hawaii for about a little over two and-  
22 a-half years. From there, I went to -- PAC Fleet as  
23 the Senior Member on the -- Examining Board. That's  
24 where I inspected the other reactor plants, both

1 carrier, cruiser and submarine, as well as repair  
2 facilities. I did that for two and-a-half years.

3 Then I went to Washington, D.C. where I went  
4 to school for a year and got a Master's Degree at  
5 Industrial College of Armed Forces, as well as worked  
6 at the Pentagon in the Office of Secretary of Defense.  
7 I've been here now at Submarine Squadron Three since  
8 August of 2000 and I'm due to get relieved here in May.

9 MR. STRAUCH: Do you have your next  
10 assignment?

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: Yes. I'll be relieving Tom  
12 Kyle and his --. So, if -- hopefully, he wanted to see  
13 me, but he may see again.

14 MR. STRAUCH: Okay, congratulations.

15 CAPT. THIEMAN: Thanks.

16 MR. STRAUCH: What was your Master's in?

17 CAPT. THIEMAN: Resourcing and National  
18 Strategy is what it was termed. So it was looked at as  
19 how does industry, industrial-based, support the  
20 National Security Strategy.

21 MR. STRAUCH: Do you have a philosophy of  
22 oversight that's personal or is the oversight that you  
23 exercise over your Squadrons consistent with the  
24 others, consistent with the Navy? In other words, how

1 do you see oversight?

2 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I take seriously my  
3 responsibility to ensure that all my six, initially I  
4 had seven, submarines until just back at Christmas  
5 time, and I've got six -- I take very seriously the  
6 idea that I'm here to prepare them for deployment and  
7 to make sure they are ready in both the people side,  
8 the maintenance side, as well as the training side. So  
9 it's, basically, a three-pronged attack there to make  
10 sure that they're fully ready.

11 I do that through both import and at-sea  
12 observations of their training, both myself and in my  
13 entire staff.

14 MR. STRAUCH: How much time do you spend in  
15 observations import and at sea?

16 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I have myself and I  
17 have a Post-Commanding Officer Deputy that's also on my  
18 staff and between the two of us, I estimate that we  
19 probably ride them about six times, between the two of  
20 us, during the course of the period from the time the  
21 ship returns from deployment until the time they deploy  
22 the next time, which equates to somebody's riding them  
23 at least once a quarter.

24 MR. STRAUCH: And how about what percentage

1 of the time, of your time, do you spend in actual  
2 observation?

3 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, it equates to about --  
4 I'm probably going to sea about once a month, go to sea  
5 for about a week on a ship with the squadron, and  
6 during that time, I generally look at everything. So  
7 I'm looking at both tactical training as well as  
8 engineering, observing and do evolutions at sea, as  
9 well as sitting in classroom training that they might  
10 give on board. I observe basic evolutions all the way  
11 up to the more complex things like shooting torpedoes  
12 and missiles.

13 MR. STRAUCH: Do you select the Commanding  
14 Officers, your Commanding Officers, or are they  
15 assigned to you?

16 CAPT. THIEMAN: They're picked by the  
17 detailers and the people senior to me.

18 MR. STRAUCH: You are the person who  
19 completes their performance appraisals, their fitness  
20 ratings, is that correct?

21 CAPT. THIEMAN: That's correct, yes. Once a  
22 year, generally, you write a formal fitness report that  
23 both of us sign and then six months in between there  
24 I'll have a mid-term counseling session where we review

1    how they're leaning towards thus far, what their  
2    strengths are, what their weaknesses are, what things  
3    they need to focus on.

4               MR. STRAUCH:  Uh-huh, and what are some of  
5    the things that will dictate the quality of somebody's  
6    fitness rating?  What are some of the things you look  
7    for?

8               CAPT. THIEMAN:  Well, I look at how well  
9    they're running the ship, which really entails how well  
10   they are managing to take their people and execute the  
11   mission that they're to be doing during the course of  
12   the period that we're evaluating.  What that may mean  
13   is if the guys, basically, brought it back from  
14   deployment and now he's going through a major shipyard  
15   availability and then a big training period, then how  
16   well is he executing that shipyard availability?  How  
17   well is he training his people?  How well is he  
18   preparing for the next deployment?

19              But that's kind of the surface.  I mean, a CO  
20   is supposed to train his XO to be a CO, his department  
21   heads to be XOs, so how well does he create an  
22   environment, a positive environment on that ship that  
23   fosters retention, that fosters people's ability to do  
24   the job of the person above him?  So all that gets

1 wrapped into it.

2 We also look at their specific retention  
3 values. We look at how many problem people he has,  
4 does he have a bunch of people who are having medical  
5 problems? I talk to each of my COs formally during a  
6 CO's meeting once a week and then generally each one of  
7 them come up about an hour, for an hour, later in the  
8 week and we sit down and just talk about what are the  
9 major issues, frustrations he's got that week; what  
10 things is he trying to deal with that he needs my help,  
11 and what things is he just looking for big brother's  
12 advice.

13 So, over the course of helping him solve all  
14 those, and as he takes on the day-to-day problems and  
15 how well he executes them also gets factors in the  
16 evaluations.

17 MR. STRAUCH: One of the things that kind of  
18 struck us both as curious is the fact that Commander  
19 Waddle had a good reputation up to the time of the  
20 accident, from what we could gather. In other words,  
21 he was thought of as pretty highly, based on retention  
22 data, based on what other people in the Squadron  
23 thought of him. After February 9th, stories came out  
24 about things that he had done that people weren't aware



1 of. I guess my question is, is that unusual for  
2 someone to be thought of highly and then after an  
3 incident to learn about them, to learn negative things  
4 about them that they hadn't heard before?

5 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I mean, I have six COs.  
6 They're very talented and super individuals, but each  
7 one of them have their own strengths and weaknesses and  
8 Scott had strengths and weaknesses. Now, what I don't  
9 -- and I can't tell you how that was dealt with, his  
10 two Commodores -- so in the course of reviewing events  
11 that didn't go right or some problem had occurred, what  
12 do is use them as opportunities to work with those COs  
13 to try to get their attention that, hey, they have an  
14 area that they need to work on.

15 These guys are all very type-A personalities,  
16 very motivated and very confident in their capabilities  
17 and sometimes they get too confident or they get --  
18 they're used to being king, if you want to call it  
19 that, and so sometimes it's hard to get their attention  
20 that they really got a blind spot in an area that  
21 they're weak in. So sometimes it takes a lot, a little  
22 more effort than you would like to think.

23 Rather than a positive suggestion, it takes  
24 sitting them down and saying, "This is screwed up, you

1     need to take personal attention. I want a letter from  
2     you in two weeks that addresses your plan on how you're  
3     going to fix this." When you lay it out pretty much  
4     that way with the Skipper, he normally, most guys, the  
5     big guys, got the idea and they take constructive  
6     action.

7                 I don't know what happened in Scott's case.  
8     That's -- I've got at least a couple of my guys who  
9     I've had to do that kind of, take that kind of, action  
10    to get them to refocus themselves in a certain area  
11    where they were weak.

12                MR. STRAUCH: Uh-huh. Well, the issue, as  
13    we're learning with Commander Waddle was that  
14    apparently people weren't aware, so it's more a  
15    question of learning about him, his weaknesses, that  
16    didn't come out until after the incident and is that  
17    unusual for negative things to come out after an  
18    incident?

19                CAPT. THIEMAN: Yes. I wouldn't say that's  
20    not -- I wouldn't say it's not unusual because  
21    everybody on a ship wants to do well. They want their  
22    ship to be the number one ship. So you forgive people  
23    some of their shortcomings and you hope, and even if  
24    you're a junior guy working on that ship, you'll

1     forgive your CO's shortcomings in certain areas if it's  
2     going to help the overall benefit of the ship and you  
3     hope that you can compensate for whatever it is.

4             I had a Skipper who was a real screamer at  
5     one point. That guy would blow up at a moment's notice  
6     whenever something went wrong. Well, you learn to  
7     adapt to that leadership style. You, one, put it in  
8     the back of your head that you didn't want to be that  
9     kind of a guy when you were a Skipper, but you learn to  
10    make sure you had what he really thought were important  
11    covered right away and then all the other things you  
12    knew were important that had to get done, you set a  
13    different schedule to make sure those happened. But  
14    you knew that if you just totally left those alone just  
15    because they weren't on his list, didn't mean that they  
16    weren't important to get done.

17            Unfortunately, when it's a Skipper -- the  
18    Submarine Forces is still grappling with how much  
19    interaction or questioning the CO the crew does and the  
20    Officers in the wardroom because, you know, we're a  
21    culture that's grown up since the days of the British  
22    and the -- where the Captain was God and people died  
23    and so some of that is up to today. The Navy still  
24    traces, puts a lot of responsibility and a lot of trust

1 in the Skippers. So it really mandates that they think  
2 carefully before they make decisions.

3 MR. STRAUCH: And how does the supervisor  
4 chain and Skipper given all the trust that's put into  
5 the CO? How does the supervisor change to ensure that  
6 the Skipper is worthy of that trust, even after being  
7 selected so that they're not surprised?

8 CAPT. THIEMAN: Right. Well, besides riding  
9 the ship because you learn a lot from riding the ship  
10 because you walk around, talk to the crew, you realize  
11 that, you know, they're probably not going to tell you  
12 that, hey, the Skipper, you know, I'm totally  
13 frustrated because dah, dah, dah, they're probably not  
14 going to do that, but there's a lot of experience  
15 between my Commanding -- Chief and the rest of my  
16 staff, as well as myself. We've been on a lot of ships  
17 and ridden a lot of different submarines, and so, you  
18 can get indicators that tell you there's some other  
19 things that are going on that don't exactly make sense,  
20 let's say, and so, you can start to do some probing,  
21 asking focus questions of people and you'll find some  
22 things out.

23 The other thing we do is we take the  
24 proactive role. We bring up topics like the

1     Greeneville in training sessions, either, let's say,  
2     with all my Skippers together where we go over the  
3     navigation issues with the tactical op issues, XO  
4     training sessions, getting the wardroom together with  
5     me on board, with the Deputy on board, going over  
6     situations like that and then talking them through,  
7     letting them talk, as well as me providing them some  
8     upper level guidance.

9             And then you do other things like calls. You  
10    know, get all the E-4s on a crew together and have them  
11    talk to me. What are you biggest problems? What are  
12    your biggest concerns? Well, eventually, you get some  
13    indicators there, some disconnects in the  
14    communications and the chain of command that would tell  
15    you that there's some problems. And, especially, if  
16    you do E-4s, E-5s, E-6s and the Chiefs and the  
17    Officers, there's some indicators there.

18            MR. STRAUCH: And what would be some of the  
19    indicators that will tell you that you need to look  
20    closer?

21            CAPT. THIEMAN: Let's see. For example, on  
22    one of my ships, I had some indicators that there were  
23    some problems based on the mass cases, the number of  
24    mass cases and how the CO handled one of the mass, some

1 problems he had with a department head. So I went out  
2 and I rode the ship for a few days and during the  
3 course of that, we did a "command climate survey,"  
4 where we interviewed E-4s, E-5s, and E-6s. Well, a  
5 whole bunch of stuff that we didn't plan on getting  
6 feedback came to us like how was their berthing bill  
7 was a big frustration.

8           The crew started being honest about  
9 frustrations they had on the ship, gave us clear  
10 indications that the Chief's orders and the blue shirts  
11 were not in sink on how they thought the ship should be  
12 running. And then, as we talked to the Chiefs, we  
13 realized there were some other frustrations between  
14 them and the Officers. So then, once we had the data,  
15 then we went back to the Captain and his command team  
16 and talked it through with them, gave them some  
17 constructive -- here are some ways that you can  
18 approach this by you going to them, then it doesn't  
19 look like its me mandating things, but you work  
20 together as a team to come up with answers that will  
21 fix these problems. And it made a big difference for  
22 the crew.

23           MR. STRAUCH: Interesting enough, if you look  
24 at these kinds of indicators on the Greeneville, it

1     seemed to be a pretty well run ship. The retention was  
2     very high and morale was very high. To your knowledge,  
3     would there have been, based on what you have, what  
4     indicators would have been available there that  
5     indicate Commander Waddle was as -- a CO as he appears  
6     to have been?

7             CAPT. THIEMAN: I don't think I -- I've been  
8     so deep involved in my Squadron. I really don't know  
9     all of what you may be talking about.

10            MR. STRAUCH: One of the things that came out  
11     that I've seen written up, various publications, is  
12     that Commander Waddle didn't really have the  
13     experience, sub driving experience because -- what was  
14     the thing of his background?

15            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: He was assigned to  
16     commissioning units, not much on the way --

17            CAPT. THIEMAN: Commissioner's Unit. I think  
18     he was on the shipyard -- right?

19            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Right.

20            CAPT. THIEMAN: And he had been -- a trident  
21     tour so he hadn't had a lot of at-sea time. He'd been  
22     XO in San Francisco I remember because I was at the --  
23     PAC Fleet.

24            MR. STRAUCH: Do you think based on the

1 experience that he had that that's a fair assessment  
2 that he didn't have the experience necessary to be a  
3 good sub driver?

4 CAPT. THIEMAN: I think we're finding out  
5 that most, a lot, of your sub driving experience  
6 important tours are your first two tours, as far as  
7 where you really get the basics and learn them well.  
8 And so, if you have a good Skipper, if you have a lot  
9 of operating time on your first ship, and/or your  
10 second one, then you're set up well for your succeeding  
11 tours.

12 The guys who spend a lot of time in the  
13 shipyard on the first tour -- when I did the new  
14 construction tour in Albany, my engineer had been like  
15 a trident, but the older class boomers -- he'd been a  
16 JO on one of those -- he was terrified of operating the  
17 ship as an OD. He didn't want to qualify. I mean, we  
18 made him qualify, made him work through it, and got  
19 him, but he still wasn't comfortable. We didn't  
20 recommend him to go on and he didn't go on to XO and  
21 CO.

22 But, if that guy had really wanted to go on  
23 with his weak skills, that was good, and he went to an  
24 SSM like Greeneville as an XO that would be a real,



1 that would be a tough job for that CO because now the  
2 guy, his number two guy, when he's asleep and they're  
3 doing intense things and he wants the XO to be the  
4 Command Duty Officer, that would be very tough on him  
5 to rely on that guy knowing that he didn't have that  
6 experience.

7 It just means that you got another guy, you  
8 got an extra guy you've got to train. Instead of being  
9 the prime guy that you want to train the crew with you,  
10 now you're also trying to get that guy the experience  
11 and watch him to help him to get the skills that he  
12 didn't have.

13 It doesn't mean it can't be done. The guy's  
14 got to be willing. I mean, you got to recognize where  
15 you're weak areas are and then you got to go work on  
16 fixing them. I don't know if Scott recognized his weak  
17 areas, nor whether he had any desire to fix them  
18 because if he thought he was fine, then he wasn't going  
19 to work on his weaknesses.

20 MR. STRAUCH: So, from what you're saying  
21 then, the experience that he had would not have been  
22 the kind of experience that you would like to see in a  
23 CO?

24 CAPT. THIEMAN: Clearly I, obviously I had a

1 lot more at-sea time in my first two tours than Scott  
2 did. You know, my XO tour wasn't really sea intensive.

3 I had about six months of strong sea time, but I've  
4 also -- my shore tours were actually sea tours too. In  
5 my Squadron Engineer job, I was at sea at least one  
6 week a month riding boats. That translates into  
7 continuing to keep your skills up. So stepping on a  
8 ship as a CO right after XO is easy because all my  
9 skills were so good, not mention that the training  
10 pipeline helps you out too.

11 On the day-to-day normal things, normally  
12 that's not a problem, but when you get into situations  
13 that are a little less mainstreamed -- what I mean is  
14 Scott was doing something, not just a routine trip to  
15 PD and so those kinds of situations like is when your  
16 lack of experience can cause you damage. When you get  
17 into a tighter situation and you try to constrain  
18 things, rush things, that's when you have to be that  
19 much better to compensate for the shortcuts you're  
20 taking. And I think he didn't have a full appreciation  
21 for what shortcuts he was taking and what the impact  
22 was going to be. Another thing is he didn't understand  
23 really how good his crew really was. I mean, coming up  
24 on a bearing with a contact running bough, that's

1 fundamental to a way of business. We don't do that.

2 MR. STRAUCH: When you perform your duties as  
3 Commodore, you -- oversight of the COs -- it's your job  
4 to get them qualified and get them as good as they can  
5 be. Is that a fair statement?

6 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, they come to me  
7 qualified. They come to me ready to take on the job,  
8 but, especially in the first three to six months,  
9 there's a lot of opportunity to get them out -- the  
10 Deputies spend a certain amount of time interacting  
11 with them to help them get in sync with their crew as  
12 well as trying to figure out where they need to put  
13 their biggest focus and then some of them need more  
14 guidance than others.

15 MR. STRAUCH: Does it reflect on the  
16 Commodore in any way if the CO seems to be having  
17 problems?

18 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, yes and no. I mean, if  
19 a got a CO who's having problems, I'm probably talking  
20 to the Chief of Staff of SUBPAC and so I'm actually  
21 using him as a big brother to help give me some extra  
22 ideas on how to help that CO succeed, as well as make  
23 sure that the boss, the Admiral, is apprised of what  
24 issues I'm dealing with if I think that they're

1 potentially going to cause, to get out of my ability of  
2 my control.

3           Since I'm not on the ship all the time,  
4 there's some element of: Okay, this guy is doing great  
5 and everything's fine. I don't need to bother them.  
6 And this one has got some disturbing points. I may  
7 need some help on this one.

8           So, I mean, we've done things like have  
9 SUBPAC riders ride some of my ships when I thought I  
10 needed some extra visibility.

11           MR. STRAUCH: Have you ever had a situation  
12 where one of your ships required so much of your  
13 attention that you were unable to give out ships the  
14 kind of attention they required.

15           CAPT. THIEMAN: Yeah. I understand what  
16 you're saying. I guess I would say that in the first  
17 year I was in command I had seven and out of that  
18 seven, all seven deployed during that year and they  
19 were kind of, they weren't not evenly distributed, so I  
20 had some points where like in one month where three  
21 ships deployed that month. So our staff was really  
22 pressed to provide the quality of training that we  
23 wanted on all the ships.

24           And one of them, I would say who was the guy,

1     who had been the best guy the year before, I probably  
2     shortchanged him and, as a result, down the road, three  
3     months later, you now, he didn't do as well on the  
4     major ship's exam, and that was directly attributable  
5     because we gave him less attention. I mean, he was one  
6     of my two best skippers. He and I were talking through  
7     the whole thing and he recognized he too was having, he  
8     was probably not being as honest with his assessments  
9     about how things were going. And so, I mean, we both  
10    regret that we didn't put more attention to the problem  
11    area. But, of course, like I said, I was focused on  
12    trying to deploy several other guys at the same time.

13               I've been blessed with really good COs and  
14    good crews and because we've managed to jump on  
15    problems early enough, with a lot of our guys we were  
16    able to avoid some of the crises, but, you know, I have  
17    one ship who's in the shipyard that had broken and had  
18    major maintenance problems, material problems, and then  
19    was in -- when I took a handle.

20               I spent, I was on that boat weekly for a  
21    month and it was tough working with everybody else and  
22    still trying to get that guy all the help he needed  
23    during that time period. And the good news was that,  
24    after about a month, I was able to let -- he went to

1 sea, and he was able to do some training on his own and  
2 I didn't have to give it that kind of attention.

3 But if you get a guy where it takes  
4 protracted longer than that, then it can be a real  
5 problem. You either got to get assistance from SUBPAC,  
6 the Type Commander like SUBPAC, or the other Squadrons  
7 to see if they can help you out to compensate.

8 MR. STRAUCH: And how would that happen, you  
9 know, seek assistance from SUBPAC or the other  
10 Squadrons?

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: For example, I'd talk to Tom  
12 Kyle as the training guy and say, "Hey, I'm worried  
13 about ship X. I've been really working with A and  
14 could you ride that guy? Next week we've got some good  
15 tactical training that was scheduled for that week.  
16 I'd like your view on how it's going." Hello.

17 CAPT. NEIDHERHAUSER: I guess I'm next on the  
18 list. Do you want me to just stand out here until  
19 you're done?

20 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: We're going to take a break  
21 right here.

22 (Whereupon, the parties recessed and the  
23 interview continued with Captain Thieman, with Captain  
24 Neiderhauser joining the interview.)

1           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay, the time is about nine  
2 thirty-three. WE had a brief break here. We were  
3 joined by Captain Neiderhauser, Commodore of Squadron  
4 Seven and Captain Neiderhauser will be joining us in  
5 the interview along with Captain Thieman. Barry, if  
6 you want to go ahead and resume with your questions.

7           MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Well, Captain  
8 Neiderhauser, I'd like to ask you then, could you walk  
9 us through your background, starting with your college  
10 education?

11          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Sure. I've got a  
12 Batchelor's in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia  
13 Tech. I entered the Navy through the NROTC Program and  
14 after that point, I went to Nuclear Power School  
15 Training in Orlando for six months. I went six months  
16 to what we call Prototype Training, Operational  
17 Training, on a shore-based nuclear power plant.

18                 From that point, I went to submarine school  
19 in New London, Connecticut for twelve weeks. I  
20 reported to my first ship, USS Tenosa out of New London  
21 and spent four and-a-half years as Junior Officer on  
22 the Tenosa. During that tour, I was a Main Propulsion  
23 Assistant, Electoral Officer and Weapons Officer. I  
24 finished that tour and went to Submarine Advance

1 Officers Court at sub school for six months and then  
2 reported to the USS Tautau in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii as  
3 Weapons Officer for a one and-a-half year tour.

4           During that tour, I did two six-month  
5 deployments and the whole tour was operational. After  
6 I had done that tour, I transferred to the USS  
7 Bremerton as Engineer Officer and served there for  
8 almost two years. During that tour, I did two  
9 deployments and ended up the tour in the shipyard. I  
10 got some shipyard experience.

11           I went to my first shore duty at Submarine  
12 Squadron Seven; a two year tour as the Squadron  
13 Engineering Officer. That tour involved going to sea  
14 probably twenty-five percent of the time supporting the  
15 ships and their training in the Engineering Plant.

16           I finished that tour and went as XO to the  
17 USS Honolulu for two years. I deployed one six-month  
18 deployment on that ship and then completed that tour  
19 and went to the Naval War College for a year. I got a  
20 Master's Degree in Strategic Studies. I got my joint  
21 training out of the way. I went to the Joint Staff; JA  
22 Director, which is Forces, Resources and basically the  
23 money business on the joint staff, running major  
24 Defense Acquisition Programs.



1           I completed that tour and went to the  
2   Prospective Commanding Officer course and Naval  
3   Reactors in Washington, D.C. for three months and then  
4   did three months of tactical training and then reported  
5   as Commanding Officer at the USS San Francisco for  
6   approximately a three-year tour.

7           When I finished there, I went two years as  
8   the Instructor for the tactics portion of the  
9   Commanding Officers Force. Basically, what I did there  
10   was spent two months of classroom training with each  
11   new CO and then went to sea for a month teaching  
12   tactics at sea.

13          Upon relieving there, I went through  
14   Commander Submarine Squadron Seven, which is the job  
15   that I have been in now for about a year.

16          MR. STRAUCH: Okay. I think, when you came  
17   in Captain, Captain Thieman was discussing a situation  
18   where one of the ships that he supervises requires  
19   considerable amount of attention and what kind of  
20   additional work he would do to assure that the other  
21   ships got the kind of oversight that they would require  
22   and he was kind of explaining what he does in that  
23   situation. Can you comment on that.

24          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, it's probably

1     worth talking about how we get there first. We build a  
2     training plan for the ship that goes from end of  
3     deployment to the time they depart on deployment and  
4     during that period of time, is anywhere between fifteen  
5     to twenty months on average.

6             The level of training of the ship during that  
7     window changes. The goal is to deliver ship at the end  
8     of that period, before they go on deployment, so  
9     they're at the top of their game. But we want them at  
10    the top of the game as they go through the training  
11    process too. We don't want them to reach a point where  
12    their training proficiency is not up to where it should  
13    be.

14            So what we do as a Squadron is I have a team  
15    of about twenty individuals, who I set up to go to sea  
16    on my ships to evaluate specific areas of performance  
17    on board the ship. We did that before the Greeneville  
18    collision and we do it today, after the Greeneville  
19    collision.

20            As a result of those rides, we have a formal  
21    write-up that's done, where we comment on the ship's  
22    performance. If the performance isn't up to the  
23    standards that I expect, then I hold the CO accountable  
24    to train his crew, tell me his plan for correcting

1 deficiencies and getting his training up to where it  
2 should be. At the same time, I engage my staff to  
3 provide the assistance they need to make sure they get  
4 the required training.

5           At a personal level, looking at individual CO  
6 performance, myself, my deputy, who is a served  
7 Commanding Officer, work with the CO to work with his  
8 specific, his personal training, problems that we see  
9 at sea.

10           I'll talk about before Greeneville and after  
11 Greeneville. Before Greeneville, the way we measured  
12 the standards, we put the guy into three categories:  
13 below average, average or above average. My basic  
14 standard is nobody's above, so you're either below  
15 average or average. If you're below average, there  
16 will be specific corrective action that you need to  
17 take.

18           Post-Greeneville, we've started quantifying a  
19 little better what those areas, below average, average,  
20 above average, are. We've probably provided a little  
21 more fidelity in our measurement techniques. However,  
22 I think the result is the same: If your standards are  
23 high, then you'll identify those areas of the ship that  
24 you're deploying.

1 I don't know if that answers your question.

2 MR. STRAUCH: Uh-huh.

3 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: -- a different track  
4 there --

5 CAPT. THIEMAN: No, it helps round out the  
6 picture for him, I think, because you came at it from a  
7 different -- that's good. I mean, that -- because when  
8 he's talking about attribute sheets and measurements, I  
9 think we do the same things. What I was referring to  
10 is when I had the one ship that had been in the  
11 shipyard for a long time period was not really  
12 reliable; was dirty, was poorly trained and that did  
13 require an additional amount of focus.

14 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I guess there's two ways  
15 to approach this problem and you see it manifest itself  
16 a couple different ways. One is that you have a ship  
17 that's maintaining to proficiency and our job is to go  
18 out and help them maintain themselves up on the step.  
19 That one is probably the easier problem to deal with.  
20 So you get some ebb and flow in talent level as a new  
21 CO reports on board, a new XO reports on board. You've  
22 got to tailor your oversight to them in a way that  
23 matches up with those significant changes.

24 So, the ship's a good ship. He's got a good

1 reputation. Your rides before have indicated that the  
2 guy has done well. You make sure that when there's a  
3 big change in personnel, that you get on board the ship  
4 and you ride them and you make sure that they still  
5 understand what the standards are.

6           The more difficult one is the one where  
7 you're taking a ship from a degraded training  
8 condition, which usually is caused by the ship's  
9 schedule and it's usually driven by maintenance  
10 periods. You get into a maintenance period. In one  
11 case, I have a ship right now that will spend about  
12 sixteen months in that shipyard availability.

13           To get them ready to go to sea, all the  
14 training you do ahead of time is done out of shore-  
15 based trainers and you complement that with sending the  
16 sailors, the team aboard the ship, to sea on other  
17 shifts so that they can get their proficiency training.

18       So, you've got to get the ship to where they're safe  
19 to go to sea and can do the fundamentals of submarining  
20 and then you've got to have a plan to get them from  
21 that basic level to the higher tactical level that we  
22 want the ship at prior to deploying. In some cases,  
23 two years later. But that one takes more energy, more  
24 time, more attention to the staff to get them trained

1 up.

2           The boat that's in a cycle where they deploy,  
3 they come back, they don't have a major maintenance  
4 availability, other than just their normal thirty-five  
5 day upkeep period, and then they go to sea again,  
6 that's the simpler case.

7           MR. STRAUCH: Captain Thieman said that there  
8 are times when, if the ship demands a lot of attention,  
9 you would go to other Squadrons for, you know,  
10 oversight help or you would ask the Chief of Staff for  
11 support. Is that correct, Captain?

12           CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I said, like for  
13 example, I've invited Tom Kyle to ride one of my ships  
14 before to help get another additional view on what the  
15 issues were there or that something, you knew that  
16 somebody needed to ride them and you were tied up on  
17 another guy, you know, if you get overlapping.

18           For example, I talked about when I was trying  
19 to get three guys deployed in the same month. Two of  
20 those guys were going to -- they both had all the key  
21 events laid on top of each other. So trying to three  
22 guys all ready for deployment -- you can't ride them  
23 all in the same week and so, for example, Tom Kyle rode  
24 one of my guys for me as that final ride.

1           I've ridden them a couple weeks before that  
2   and was confident they would be fine, but when it came  
3   down to it, I just couldn't ride all three.

4           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Our average Squadron  
5   size is six boats. It will go to five here in the next  
6   year. The Squadron staffs are sized where we can  
7   support pretty aggressive training at sea for two to  
8   three boats at a time. So, if you look at the way the  
9   boats are lined up, you have a guy's maintenance  
10  availabilities and it works out pretty well.

11           The only time you get into a problem is when  
12  you get stacked up against three guys trying to deploy  
13  at the same time, then you need to get assistance and  
14  that's where you go to get some help, the SUBPAC staff  
15  or the Tactical -- Inspection Team.

16           I haven't gotten to that point yet. I've  
17  been here a year and I have not been in a situation  
18  where I can't provide my ships with the right amount of  
19  oversight. I think we're okay. My tough time's coming  
20  up here in the next couple of months and we've laid out  
21  a good plan for the next six months to make sure we  
22  have the right --

23           CAPT. THIEMAN: And that's back when I still  
24  had seven, so that's why.

1           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, that's a much more  
2     difficult problem, especially with the -- of your  
3     support needs.

4           MR. STRAUCH: Can you envision a situation  
5     where one ship requires so much of your attention that  
6     you can't provide oversight to any other ship in your  
7     Squadron?

8           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I could envision that,  
9     but I probably wouldn't let that happen very long. If  
10    we got to the point where they're getting more  
11    attention they desire, then that indicates to me  
12    there's some performance-level -- people and people  
13    need to move. I haven't fired any of my COs, but I  
14    have fired some lower level, not lower level, but mid-  
15    management personnel. I've relieved two Chief of Boats  
16    -- the boats for that very reason; is that I was  
17    spending too much time having to do their jobs for them  
18    and my staff was spending too much time. So, in that  
19    case, I took those two -- off the ship.

20           So, to answer your question, yeah, I can  
21    imagine it, but it wouldn't last very long.

22           CAPT. THIEMAN: Yeah, because the problem is  
23    it's the same kind of issue as if the Skipper has one  
24    department where he's so focused on one department that



1 the other departments aren't getting his attention.  
2 You can only deal with that -- like we were talking --  
3 basically, outside of a quarter or three-month period,  
4 if you still haven't managed to figure out how to solve  
5 that problem or it hasn't repaired itself based on your  
6 efforts, then you got to look at some people changing  
7 out or bringing in some additional assistance because  
8 those other areas are definitely require your  
9 attention.

10 MR. STRAUCH: Is there any incentive for  
11 someone, a Commodore, to not publicize problems with a  
12 ship because, perhaps, it may reflect badly on his  
13 performance as Commodore?

14 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: No. I think it's  
15 probably personality driven. I don't really care that  
16 my boss would be happy with one of my boats. I guess I  
17 would prefer to deal with the problem in a way where my  
18 boss knows that I'm doing a good job and that my staff  
19 is doing a good job and we're keeping it apprised of  
20 things as they come up.

21 I would think the other approach is worse,  
22 when my boss, SUBPAC, calls me and leans on me because  
23 I haven't done my job. So I think the better approach  
24 is be up front and clear about problems. And I'm not

1 sure if it makes any difference in terms of future jobs  
2 on the performance of your boats.

3           It may sound a little silly, but unlike being  
4 a CO on a submarine where the performance of ship is  
5 yours alone. The Squadron Commander is in charge of  
6 training, the readiness of those ships, but the CO is  
7 still the CO and, as long as you keep him in place as  
8 the CO, he's the guy responsible for the performance of  
9 the ship and I'm responsible for six of them, but it's  
10 a different kind of responsibility than the absolute  
11 responsibility the CO has.

12           So the fact that -- like last week I had a  
13 boat go out and do an engineers exam and they got an  
14 average on it. And I'm pretty disappointed with an  
15 average. I would be able to live with an average  
16 because I think you can do better than that, but that  
17 ship, that CO, his priorities was willing to say that  
18 average was good enough for the schedule the ship had  
19 and the team that he had on board.

20           I can't -- I guess I could lean on him and  
21 say average isn't good enough, but he has to make the  
22 decision each day and set his priorities on what things  
23 are more important. And I'd like all my boats to be  
24 excellent in every area so that Squadron Seven would be

1 an excellent Squadron, but I'm kind of -- they see  
2 themselves.

3 MR. STRAUCH: Captain Thieman?

4 CAPT. THIEMAN: You kind of already asked me  
5 that question, but everybody's going to have problems.  
6 I mean, each ship is going to have people problems,  
7 material problems, whatever, where things don't go  
8 right and our boss has made it clear to us that, you  
9 know, we're not out to shoot the guys who make  
10 mistakes, but we're to focus on identifying what is the  
11 mistake, how did it happen, what are the causes and  
12 then training everybody so that we don't have that  
13 mistake repeated on another ship or that ship.

14 And, as long as we focus things that way,  
15 then having issues like that isn't a problem. And, in  
16 fact, how you get through that corrective action in  
17 that training can a lot of times be real positive.

18 MR. STRAUCH: Captain Neiderhauser, didn't  
19 you say you only have average and below average? That  
20 you didn't believe in above average?

21 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right and that's more  
22 driven in terms of the exams I give. The engineering  
23 exam we're talking about doesn't belong to me. That is  
24 a -- in fact a Fleet Commander's exam. It's not even a

1 Type Commander's exam. That belong to -- Fargo. So  
2 his organization gives average, below average, and  
3 above average, excellent.

4 I know what good enough performance looks  
5 like, which is what I call average and anything above  
6 that is great. Captain, you know, if you can define  
7 that as great. Below average, I know what that looks  
8 like. So, I guess the point of your question is since  
9 I won't accept anything less than an average as a CO of  
10 a submarine, what does it look like -- I've seen enough  
11 good performance over the years. I could get there,  
12 but I'm not going to tell a guy he's above average  
13 because I don't want him to stop working.

14 MR. STRAUCH: Do you also feel that the  
15 performance of the ship doesn't reflect that much on  
16 your performance as Commodore? That it's more  
17 reflective of the CO's because of the nature of the  
18 CO's relationship to the ship?

19 CAPT. THIEMAN: Probably not as strongly as -  
20 - to some extent, it does reflect on -- but more in the  
21 sense of -- like I was talking, if a boat's doing  
22 poorly, but you got a plan and then you get a positive  
23 upslope, that's good. Then the boss is happy with  
24 that.

1           If you've got something where every boat's  
2   weak in a certain area, like say navigation and  
3   piloting, well, after about the second or third guy has  
4   the same weakness, then you -- if you haven't figured  
5   out, "Okay, I've got a systemic problem here. I need  
6   to go deal with it and I might as well as treat all six  
7   guys that are having that problem and then go fix it,  
8   then the Admiral's going to get frustrated."

9           Off on the other hand, because I had two  
10   shifts -- and this kind of happened to me -- is I had  
11   two guys that were weak in navigation piloting from an  
12   external look and said, "Okay, what's common here," and  
13   it turns out it was a combination of people, the  
14   training and sea time. Okay, well, before I go and get  
15   the next guy assessed at the same point in time, let's  
16   make sure I don't have those same things in place. So  
17   let's fix, as well as feedback, what are the new things  
18   we're looking at in those areas so that the boats have  
19   been prepared. So, from the third guy that has that  
20   exam of navigation will do much better.

21           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The flavor of the way he  
22   asked the question, I heard it as: Do I -- am I  
23   worried about what my boss thinks based on performance?  
24   But if you ask it a different way: Do I feel like I'm

1 responsible for my ships, then the answer is yes, and I  
2 take that responsibility pretty seriously. So, you  
3 know, I guess we're not afraid of looking bad, but at  
4 the same time, if a guy messes up down there or we see  
5 poor performance, we hold them accountable for it.

6 MR. STRAUCH: One of the things that came  
7 through in the Court of Inquiry, a number of things  
8 that Commander Waddle had done that the Court of  
9 Inquiry appeared to disapprove of. So let me ask  
10 first: Are you familiar with the proceedings of the  
11 Court of Inquiry and what they found about the errors  
12 that the Greeneville performed that day?

13 CAPT. THIEMAN: I think we're familiar  
14 enough, but --

15 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Let's say I'd rather --  
16 the results. I've seen the process results, which --

17 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Well, among the things  
18 that the Court cited were that Commander Waddle had  
19 changed the watch bill -- the watch bill exceeded  
20 certain classified aspects doing with depth and speed,  
21 rush through TMA --

22 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Uh-huh.

23 CAPT. THIEMAN: Uh-huh.

24 MR. STRAUCH: Anything else? Did I miss

1 anything?

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Didn't perform an adequate  
3 visual search.

4 MR. STRAUCH: If this had happened on your  
5 ship, how would you assure yourselves that you would  
6 not have been surprised by those things? That you  
7 would have known about these before an accident  
8 occurred?

9 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, first of all, the  
10 way I'm going to know is I'm going to have somebody on  
11 board the ship. What you're talking about is a  
12 Commodore?

13 MR. STRAUCH: Yeah.

14 CAPT. THIEMAN: So I'm going to need to get  
15 my trusted agents, my support team to provide me with  
16 that data. On my staff, I've got a very good group of  
17 guys and the basis process is -- even if I'm not going  
18 out to do an inspection, my senior rider provides a  
19 list of deficiencies to the ship and also reports back  
20 to me.

21 At the same time, my Officers are empowered  
22 by me to intervene and as an example of if a ship is  
23 due in a baffle clear and my officer, all of my  
24 officers are Lt. Commander and above right now --

1   they're lay officers -- were in the control room as a  
2   baffle clear was not being conducted in accordance with  
3   procedures, he would intervene and tell the Captain  
4   that the baffle clear is unsatisfactory -- until it was  
5   done correctly.

6               So we have that error now that's occurred and  
7   what follow-up action is required on that and if I were  
8   underway and saw that -- crawl and the skill level  
9   deficiency we would stop, we would get the watch team  
10   relieved and we would critique it in the wardroom. We  
11   would take the lessons from that critique and feed it  
12   back into the watch standers. That's pretty much  
13   routine of what we do now.

14              The question is what level of deficiency gets  
15   you to that point? Baffle clear, going to periscope  
16   depth, would fall into this category.

17              MR. STRAUCH: How do you know that the crew  
18   isn't performing the same way when you're guys aren't  
19   on the ship?

20              CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, I leave that up to  
21   a little bit of personal talent. What I do when I ride  
22   a ship is -- there's basically two levels of skills  
23   that you see; you see the basic fundamental execution  
24   of the process, whether it's procedure, etc., did they



1 do that right, but then there's another level of  
2 training that you can observe if you sit there and  
3 watch long enough and check, you can see the way the  
4 Officer of the Deck is thinking and you can watch the  
5 way the Captain is thinking and if you sit out there  
6 long enough in the control room and watch a team work  
7 for a couple hours together, you can find the  
8 deficiencies that they are going to get into trouble in  
9 the future.

10           It may not be giving them trouble right now,  
11 but you can see the way they process the information,  
12 the way they're communicating as a team and working as  
13 a team. How does the CO get involved? is the CO  
14 driving the problem? Do the OD's make decisions by  
15 themselves and then make recommendations to the Captain  
16 or is the Captain always there to tell them what to do?

17           So, the way I satisfy myself is I spend a  
18 heck of a lot of time when I'm riding the ship just in  
19 the control room watching the performance of the team  
20 and I'll make it a point when I ride a ship and ride my  
21 average -- I've been riding for years -- I would say I  
22 get three weeks per ship, three times, personally, on  
23 each of my ships a year. Some might be a little more  
24 than that, but I would say the average is about three

1 week-long periods. And then my deputies ride too, so  
2 in a year we probably get six weeks of riding time on a  
3 boat.

4 What I make sure of is that I see the XO  
5 operate with the watch team. I see all the Officer of  
6 Decks operate. I know who my weak department heads are  
7 on my five, six ships and the guys that are weak I make  
8 a particular effort when I'm riding to spend more time  
9 during their performance. And recently, one of the  
10 ships I had, I went out to ride them and, basically, I  
11 came back in and relieved one of the Officer of Decks  
12 standing at his watch until we did an upgrade program  
13 to be able to stand watch. That's kind of a --.

14 MR. STRAUCH: Now, is that the six weeks and  
15 I think you said once a quarter --

16 CAPT. THIEMAN: Six weeks between the two of  
17 those, yeah.

18 MR. STRAUCH: Is that written anywhere?

19 CAPT. THIEMAN: No. It kind of falls out  
20 that way to some extent, based on the schedule the ship  
21 has and the Major looks, the Type Commanders ask us --  
22 that equates to half that, at least and then the other  
23 ones, because the two of us operate a lot and know that  
24 by going to sea you see a lot more and you like to go

1 see a ship when you're not doing a major inspection so  
2 you have more flexible time and spend more time just  
3 working with the crew and getting some more training  
4 in.

5 MR. STRAUCH: Would you get in trouble if you  
6 didn't get out at all? You personally didn't observe  
7 any of the ships yourselves?

8 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I wouldn't worry about  
9 getting into trouble with my boss, but the performance  
10 of the ships would suffer if you didn't go out.

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: You wouldn't be able to  
12 establish the standards that you'd expect from the  
13 Squadron if you don't --

14 MR. STRAUCH: There's nothing written that  
15 says, You shall go out this number of times? Your  
16 staff shall go out this number of times?

17 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: No, it's not written.

18 MR. STRAUCH: What about verbal instructions  
19 from Chief of Staff or somebody above you in your line  
20 of supervision?

21 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I guess we got an  
22 instruction -- I don't know -- you have instructions as  
23 a Squadron -- response to these things. Well, the  
24 conduct -- so there are some inspections that you're

1 responsible for. You, as the Commodore, you just kind  
2 of assume that you would be the guy that's going to sea  
3 -- but -- sometimes I have a Deputy do one of those --  
4 because we cannot separate that with some other reason  
5 that I need to go to sea -- this many officers.

6 MR. STRAUCH: Since you've -- in your present  
7 position, has the Commodore of the Squadron, which the  
8 Greeneville belongs, ever ask you to assist him in  
9 oversight of any of his boats?

10 CAPT. THIEMAN: Yes.

11 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yes. I provided, on one  
12 occasion, my post-Command Deputy to go out, in a non-  
13 inspection-type scenario, go out and assess -- one crew  
14 to see how they were doing in their preparations for  
15 their deployment certification.

16 MR. STRAUCH: Was this before February 9<sup>th</sup> of  
17 last year?

18 CAPT. THIEMAN: No. I haven't been there -- I  
19 got -- so it would have been this year.

20 CAPT. THIEMAN: Yeah, and he had one of my  
21 guys look and it was before the collision.

22 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: And there was another  
23 case where he asked me to go out and do the  
24 certification, but I chose not to do that.

1 MR. STRAUCH: Could you tell us why?

2 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Because I think it's his  
3 responsibility to do that.

4 MR. STRAUCH: Okay.

5 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: If he wants me to go out  
6 and just ride his ship and help him train his ship, I'd  
7 be more than happy to do that, or if he wants my staff  
8 to support him in his role in his inspection that's  
9 fine.

10 CAPT. THIEMAN: He had two guys that were  
11 both deployed at the same time. -- trying to figure  
12 out how to make it work.

13 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, I don't want to  
14 bad mouth my shipmate over there, but my view is you  
15 build a schedule such that you can be on both. You  
16 don't build it so that they're both the same.

17 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: We just turned the tape over  
18 to the second side and we're resuming the interview.

19 MR. STRAUCH: So, is there anyway the  
20 Commodore should be surprised at the offense of  
21 February 9<sup>th</sup> before the collision, you know, exceeding  
22 the test depth and the speed limit, TMAs and so on?

23 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, we would like to think  
24 not, but we have all, I mean, each of us have found,

1 not to the same magnitude, we've had COs who we have  
2 seen do well make dumb decisions tactically out there  
3 and almost get themselves in trouble. Maybe not to the  
4 same degree, but, you know, for example, I had a CO who  
5 drove out of his box one and he made the decision to do  
6 that. So that was frustrating that he made that poor  
7 tactical decision on his own when there was sufficient  
8 guidance on the ship that should have told him  
9 otherwise.

10 So we went through an upgrade program. He  
11 and I spent some time, one-on-one, discussing how he  
12 got in front of his team such that he then prevented  
13 them from doing all the normal events that would have  
14 caused them to prevent doing that because he was going  
15 to deploy down the stream another three to six months  
16 later and I wanted to make sure he fully understood the  
17 magnitude of what he did and how it got him into  
18 trouble.

19 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I would approach the  
20 question from a little different direction. How is it  
21 possible that a ship could go six, eight, nine months  
22 without his boss riding or his representative of me  
23 riding to evaluate the performance of the ship and  
24 that's the challenge is there are unique cases where a

1 ship, particularly if they're not to the normal  
2 deployment cycle where, for some reason, because of the  
3 testing they're doing or there's new equipment being  
4 installed in the ship or an extended -- availability,  
5 they're kind of out of the cycle so you got to make  
6 sure that, even though they're not -- as path of  
7 deployment, you still are looking at them at the same  
8 frequency.

9           And it's just like anything. You'll go where  
10 the attention is deserved so, if you've got a guy who's  
11 deployed, that's the hottest topic on the sheet today,  
12 you got to get your guy ready to go do a six month  
13 deployment. The tendency would be to focus your  
14 attention there and focus each time as each guy comes  
15 up in the batter's box. You've got to make sure that  
16 those guys that are still sitting on the bench are  
17 being looked at.

18           So, to answer your question, could it happen,  
19 it can if you're not watching out. You'll find that a  
20 couple months could go by and you'll recognize that the  
21 guy that's sitting on the bench that's not ready to bat  
22 for a while hasn't been looked at. So that's -- you  
23 got to have a process in the Squadron to look at that.

24

1           The way we do it is we do a weekly schedule  
2   review with my staff asking those kinds of questions of  
3   how we're doing, have we changed the schedule in a way  
4   that has caused us to not schedule a time to -- and  
5   look at the -- and ship and the -- of that is driven  
6   more by how well you can build a schedule, how well  
7   does your team engage to look at what events are coming  
8   up and making sure that you get guys on the ship  
9   frequently to watch --.

10           CAPT. THIEMAN: I guess the other part -- and  
11   that's all true, you know -- what I was going to is  
12   trying to -- how do we avoid post-Greeneville, making  
13   sure that our COs don't make strange, unorthodox  
14   decisions to go do something with their ship and then  
15   to have the entire ship just do it as well, agree to  
16   let -- to happen.

17           So we've spent a lot of effort in our  
18   wardrooms, chief's quarters, talking through the thing,  
19   working through it, giving them scenarios and putting  
20   them into situations to try to see that they will, in  
21   fact, do the right thing and back a CO in a way that  
22   prevents us from having these things occur, but it's  
23   not an easy thing. Because, like I said to everyone  
24   earl on when you asked the question a different way,



1 it's a cultural thing that we're trying to deal with.

2 MR. STRAUCH: Well, how does one get the XO  
3 and the other Officers to be more assertive in the face  
4 of this very assertive CO or how do you get them to  
5 recognize that they just didn't stand up and --?

6 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I think part of that is  
7 just having the discussion. I talked to my Junior  
8 Officers on each of my ships about that in particular  
9 and it's even more important now -- Greeneville --  
10 their responsibility to speak of, to voice their  
11 concerns and if they aren't listened to, then I told  
12 them, "You come talk to me if you're not getting the  
13 support you need on the ship."

14 So, one is over that avenue for those very  
15 few, unique cases where a guy might be put in that  
16 position. So that's another way for me to know if  
17 there's a problem with the ship. Now it sounds easy.  
18 I feel I'm approachable, but in your average Ensign or  
19 Lt. JG when I say that, is he really going to come talk  
20 to me?

21 The same thing with the department heads and  
22 the XOs too. I've had seminars with my XOs talking  
23 about those issues and you would hope that they would  
24 feel comfortable, if they had a problem with their

1     Commanding Officer, being in an environment where  
2     people would back them up or at least bring it up to me  
3     so that I can go to the CO.

4             MR. STRAUCH:   In your seminars you've had  
5     with your XOs, how often have you learned of problems  
6     they've had with their COs?

7             CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  I have not had a case  
8     yet where -- that a junior person addressed with me a  
9     problem with their Commanders.  That being said, I've  
10    observed cases where I had to talk to the Commanding  
11    Officer.

12            CAPT. THIEMAN:  I would say that I had a  
13    situation where the XO has talked, went along with my  
14    Deputy, to get some advice on how to deal with issues.  
15    I mean, I have had XOs do that.  And then based on  
16    that discussion, the deputy suggested I talk to the XO,  
17    so -- one-on-one with the XO.

18            MR. STRAUCH:  Is it possible in a situation  
19    like that the CO could retaliate against an XO if he  
20    heard that the XO was going to his boss?

21            CAPT. THIEMAN:  Well, I mean, it depends on  
22    what the magnitude of the issue is and how well the  
23    Skipper is going to understand what the XO did and how  
24    he did it for him.  Long-term damage?  I don't think

1 so. If the environment had deteriorated to the point  
2 where the CO was going to try to have some sort of  
3 retribution, I mean, -- senior than the CO, the CO no  
4 dummy and besides he'll probably end up moving  
5 somebody.

6 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The only way it will  
7 affect the guy is in the fitness report. If he got an  
8 adverse fitness report, the guy could comment on it.  
9 That would be the way to -- that issue if he was  
10 unreasonable and also review -- I have XO's come up and  
11 bring their records up to see me to get ready for their  
12 next promotion board or screening board. That's  
13 another way where I can check to see if that was going  
14 on.

15 CAPT. THIEMAN: I would expect a CO to come  
16 talk to me about the performance his XO is -- at that  
17 point and you can see that pretty quickly. If you're  
18 underway with the ship and the XO and the CO aren't  
19 working well as a team, it only takes about two hours  
20 to figure that out.

21 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Just long enough to get  
22 on board and get down the hatch.

23 CAPT. THIEMAN: Watch the first -- weeks,  
24 right.

1 MR. STRAUCH: You've seen that happen?

2 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I don't think I have  
3 right now a single CO and XO that don't get a long.

4 CAPT. THIEMAN: I saw it as a Squadron  
5 Engineer when I rode a boat where the CO and XO were  
6 very different personalities with very strong wills and  
7 butted heads.

8 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Butting heads, yeah.

9 CAPT. THIEMAN: It was easy obvious. But I  
10 don't think I have any of those right now.

11 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That's the worse -- the  
12 more difficult one is the case where the CO's carry the  
13 load for the XO. Really, we should take a hard look at  
14 the XO to get him off the ship because he really needs  
15 to provide back-up to the Commanding Officer and if the  
16 CO is carrying that guy, then we're not doing him any  
17 justice.

18 MR. STRAUCH: We've talked about changes  
19 since the Greeneville collision. Are there any other  
20 specific changes that come from above or changes you've  
21 done in the way you do your business since the  
22 collision?

23 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I see a lot of training  
24 was mandated from above, as well as -- they also had us

1 from the boat level up come back here and look at  
2 ourselves, look at our assessment processes to try and  
3 figure out if we have any other Greenvilles or any  
4 other areas on a ship where we have blind spots like  
5 that. I think we've spent a better part of a year  
6 wrestling with those issues off and on.

7 Obviously, we were very focused in the first  
8 three to six months afterwards, but then, even on  
9 again, as we revisited periodically.

10 MR. STRAUCH: Has the nature of certification  
11 of a ship changed since the Greenville accident?

12 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I think in the ideal  
13 case it has, but I think the real problem is that we  
14 weren't consistent through the whole fleet: SUBPAC,  
15 SUBLAND, each -- force Squadron and we have a proven  
16 record of good standards, I think.

17 But, when those standards aren't enforced  
18 equitably across, or equally, not equitably, equally  
19 across the fleet, then you have problems. I think  
20 where we returned in the last year to is reenforcement  
21 of the standards and better definition of what those  
22 standards are. That's some of the things -- it's still  
23 a work in progress -- is that I think, as a group, were  
24 stepping back and saying, "Okay, what are our

1 standards? Does the fleet understand those, that we  
2 are enforcing those?"

3 A good example is on the Greeneville there  
4 was the amount of time the guy should spend on a leg  
5 before doing a TMA maneuver and the fundamental rule is  
6 three minutes. Well, it's written in the standing  
7 orders that way, but that's also something as a fleet  
8 we know is three minutes. You ought to be spending at  
9 least three minutes on a leg. Two minutes is too  
10 short. One minute is way too short.

11 So, had we been looking at that in detail and  
12 when you start pulling the string, you find out that,  
13 yeah, we knew -- but were we measuring that? We were  
14 going out and looking at each guy? Were we making sure  
15 that they were doing it? And we're doing that kind of  
16 stuff now that we hadn't done before.

17 Technology has helped us a little bit in that  
18 regard. We got automated contact evaluation -- I don't  
19 know if you guys have gotten into the CDS yet, but one  
20 of the things we do that help us look at these really  
21 fundamental capabilities that we should have is we just  
22 take a picture of that, print that screen for each --  
23 and then we go through that thing and with a fine-  
24 toothed comb and make sure that we've met all the

1 requirements we want to -- two -- in every contact?

2 Were they three minutes long? Did we keep any baffle  
3 area unclear for a period of X number of minutes?

4 So I think those are the kinds of things that  
5 we are doing now that we hadn't been doing, let's say,  
6 a year ago.

7 MR. STRAUCH: You were going to say  
8 something, Captain?

9 CAPTAIN THIEMAN: No.

10 MR. STRAUCH: Okay. Looking at the automated  
11 contact -- is that something that you collect from your  
12 ships and look at them with a fine-toothed comb or do  
13 you expect the COs to look at their own.

14 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I expect the COs to look  
15 at their own. I've trained my COs to -- first of all,  
16 you shouldn't get a periscope if you don't meet any of  
17 those requirements. So let's say you've checked that  
18 out, you've checked the screen out, you've determined  
19 the safety of the periscope depth, you've met all the  
20 requirements for the periscope depth, now you take a  
21 picture of it and you sit down after-the-fact and make  
22 sure that you did it right.

23 Now, are they doing that at every periscope  
24 depth? I don't make them do that, but I've told the

1 COs that they should be routinely, as part of their  
2 assessment process, sitting down, critiquing with their  
3 Watch Officers after they've deployed the periscope  
4 depth, whether they did it correctly. That tool,  
5 technology, has helped us there: to really demonstrate  
6 what the conditions of the ship were.

7 MR. STRAUCH: Uh-huh. After February 9<sup>th</sup>,  
8 Commander Waddle was relieved and the new Captain came  
9 on board, the ship was recertified and then they had  
10 the grounding incident, and, I guess, where we sit,  
11 it's kind of hard for us to explain how a ship can be  
12 recertified and then have another incident occur --  
13 apparently the charts were missing and so-on. As  
14 Commodores, how do you assure that when you certify a  
15 ship it's really qualified? And what errors could lead  
16 to a certification of a ship that's not qualified?  
17 Captain Thieman, can you answer that first?

18 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, obviously since then, I  
19 mean, one of the things we've done is we've done chart  
20 audits on all our ships and now we've looked at  
21 systems. Does each ship have a system where they  
22 regularly inventory against what the latest conversion  
23 of a lower truss is supposed to be and that kind of  
24 thing?



1           How do we get the ship certified? See,  
2   because the certification, yeah, there's a one-week  
3   underway that's the final exam, but we don't go into  
4   the final exam without it having -- we've checked all  
5   the blocks once before that and so import and at sea  
6   we've gone through charts. In this case, they knew  
7   that they had, that the navigator and ANAV there were  
8   some issues there they had identified. They had a  
9   plan.

10           I mean, I don't know how specific it was and  
11   how measurable it was, but one of the things was that  
12   it was similar situations: When you ask somebody who  
13   has a problem in navigation, is making sure that the  
14   ship and the Skipper has taken ownership of: I do have  
15   a problem. Here are the route causes and here's the  
16   plan to get me there.

17           And then, during that course of corrective  
18   action, then the Squadron's got to be there to verify  
19   that, in fact, we're on the slope that we wanted to be  
20   and improving in that area. And so that -- it should  
21   be a validation. Okay, yep, we meet the standards in  
22   all the areas. If there's something that doesn't meet  
23   a standard, then we got to come up with another plan  
24   and fix it.

1           I'd say post-Greeneville, the two of us  
2   definitely would like to not have anybody that doesn't  
3   meet standards in all the areas on -- so we're trying  
4   to be preventive and make sure that early enough on  
5   figure out where all the weak areas are and work on  
6   them, such as the boat passing the final exam in flying  
7   colors.

8           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The requirement to do,  
9   in the specific case of the secretary, would require me  
10   to do a NAVSAR on the ship and the NAVSAR process is  
11   robust enough to capture the fact that the Greeneville  
12   had deficiencies that should have prevented her from --  
13   .

14           The way this process works is you've got an  
15   expert that works for us, who is supposed to do that  
16   assessment, because as a Commodore, you're not going to  
17   do everything yourself, so you got a Lt. Commander how  
18   is an ex-Navigator and you've got, usually, a Chief or  
19   a -- Chief who's been an Assistant Navigator to a ship.  
20

21           So, to answer your question, how could you  
22   make sure that the boat is ready to go, that she is  
23   certified to do whatever her task is, the answer is  
24   you've got to have quality people working for you. As

1 the Commodore, you need to know if that person has the  
2 skills that it takes to do the inspection. And,  
3 second, that they are enforcing the standards at the  
4 level they expect to be done.

5 My senses on this particular case, and I  
6 don't know the individual involved, but the individual  
7 who was in charge of doing that certification for that  
8 Commodore and, even the second-level guy, the Ops  
9 Officer, if he was involved, didn't do his job.

10 CAPT. THIEMAN: Or, at the every least, the  
11 things that spot-checked in the charts area clearly  
12 wasn't charts -- they may have picked Hong Kong to do  
13 his spot check of the charts and those were fine. I  
14 don't know.

15 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I've just seen -- my  
16 Senior Chief that does that area in particular and then  
17 there's a Senior Chief that works for the Tactical --  
18 Examination team. I've had both of them ride with me  
19 underway and both of those guys are very, very  
20 rigorous. And the Greeneville problems that they had  
21 the second time would have never gone undetected to  
22 either one of those guys.

23 MR. STRAUCH: How much of that do you think  
24 is post-Greeneville?

1           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: No. Those two guys are,  
2 again, top notch in the business, so you have to make  
3 sure that the people that you have working with you on  
4 your staff are top notch people and if you don't have  
5 top notch people, then you need to move those guys out  
6 and put them in a position that's not as important as  
7 the position that they hold because I depend on them to  
8 do those critical assessments for me.

9           MR. STRAUCH: Is that easy to do, if you  
10 don't have top notch people to get them out and replace  
11 them with people who are?

12           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, I think if I had a  
13 guy like that I wouldn't have a problem moving him.

14           MR. STRAUCH: Okay.

15           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right now on my staff I  
16 don't have a guy that I would consider substandard in  
17 any way.

18           MR. STRAUCH: How do each of you feel about  
19 DV cruises?

20           CAPT. THIEMAN: DV cruises? They play a role  
21 -- you know, we've been the silent service for a long  
22 period of time; probably took some hits on money, you  
23 know, procurement, things that -- this is, obviously,  
24 one way to help sell, tell the story about the

1 submarine services and if you used properly, it's a  
2 very positive thing to help us do our business, but we  
3 have to blend those with what our ships do because, I  
4 mean, none of my guys have just extra weeks at sea that  
5 they can just wait and just go off and do things that  
6 don't provide value added for them. If we can do these  
7 in conjunction with other underway such that it doesn't  
8 really impact us too greatly then we're fine.

9 MR. STRAUCH: And if not?

10 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, we just have them walk  
11 through the ship -- but, obviously, there's a lot  
12 bigger story tell when you're at sea than there is when  
13 you're on shore.

14 MR. STRAUCH: Do you judge COs one way or the  
15 other if they always volunteer for a DV cruise versus  
16 if they turn down DV cruises?

17 CAPT. THIEMAN: Oh, there's a misconception  
18 there. One, I don't think we've done any DV cruises  
19 since then, have we?

20 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, we have done some,  
21 yes.

22 CAPT. THIEMAN: Not too many.

23 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, about --

24 CAPT. THIEMAN: Because the problem is since

1 September 11<sup>th</sup>, then things kind of changed for us too.

2 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Since February of last  
3 year, in my Squadron, I had one ship do, what we call,  
4 family cruises, where the ship, the family cruise went  
5 out for a portion of the day and came back in and I was  
6 very involved in the timeline on how to execute that.  
7 There's a lot of value in doing that. I think it's  
8 very important to deal with the families over there.  
9 Their husbands go to sea for years at a time, away from  
10 them and they need to see what their husbands are  
11 doing. I don't think that's unreasonable to do that as  
12 long as it is done safely.

13 On the other side, the DV cruise, which is  
14 different than the family cruise, executed very similar  
15 in terms of what you do, the DV cruise, you know, has  
16 value, but I think it needs make sure that if we're  
17 going to do it, we do it infrequently and second of  
18 all, it's with the people that who makes a difference  
19 to take out.

20 And, at the top of my list would be members  
21 of Congress, who are paying the money. And this is a  
22 personal view, now. This is not my bosses view. It's  
23 members of Congress who are paying the money to fund  
24 these vessels. So, to say not to do it, is

1 inappropriate, I think.

2 As you digress from there, where's the line  
3 in the sand? The kinds of people that you're going to  
4 take out. If I were in charge, I would probably set it  
5 a little differently. But, in defense of DV cruises, I  
6 did DV cruises when I had to and it can be done safely,  
7 correctly and I think the key is not from the  
8 Commanding Officer or the team that is actually  
9 operating the ship, to get overly engaged in the  
10 process of taking them out there.

11 Just the fact that you take someone underway,  
12 submerge the ship, come back into port is enough to  
13 demonstrate the skill level of training of your crew.  
14 I mean, they can see that talking to the crew. It  
15 doesn't take the Commanding Officer's engagement in  
16 that.

17 That's the kind of training we have to do  
18 with our Commanding Officers to make sure they  
19 understand that. That you're not getting credit for me  
20 for going out there and doing this thing. This is one  
21 of the tasks that you have to do and the most important  
22 thing to do is to do it safely and correctly. Putting  
23 on a good show is not part of that.

24 LT. THIEMAN: The focus, when I did

1 dependents cruises or a DV cruise when I was a Skipper  
2 and I said, "XO," I'll talk to them in discreet time  
3 periods, but when we're doing a major ship evolution,  
4 my full focus is on the ship evolution, you're the tour  
5 guide, you're the one talking to them about what we're  
6 doing and how we're doing it. I want to focus with my  
7 watch team -- these guys to make sure we execute the  
8 things smartly because that's the most important thing  
9 and that's the kind of philosophy I counsel all my COs  
10 before they run off and -- so they don't get  
11 distracted.

12 I mean, yeah, you can have lunch in the  
13 wardroom with them and you can spend some time with  
14 them in different -- depending on what you're doing,  
15 but when you're doing an evolution, for example, this  
16 trip to PD, you want that to be professionally the way  
17 it's supposed to be done, exactly right and safely  
18 right because that's the best appreciation they can get  
19 out of our business is watching us professionally do  
20 our job.

21 MR. STRAUCH: You know, Commander Waddle  
22 seemed almost seemed to seek out DV cruises. People on  
23 the boat all said that he enjoyed them. He liked  
24 showing off the boat. He, himself, said that he



1 enjoyed it, and I see you're both smiling. My question  
2 is why are you smiling?

3 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, this is public  
4 record so I won't embarrass anybody. This is my view:  
5 There are people -- you work for your boss and you  
6 find out what it is that gets me attention with my  
7 boss. Okay? What are the things that are important  
8 with my boss? Now, the problem is, is that just  
9 because I didn't mention it, doesn't mean it's not  
10 important to me. One of the themes that Everett  
11 Kanesty (ph) had was engagement as one of his three  
12 things. And, as part of the engagement, it came out  
13 across a wide spectrum, engagement of our Sister's  
14 Services Engagements of our Sister Communities,  
15 Engagement of our Foreign Allies, as well as Engagement  
16 of the Civilian Population to tell them what we do here  
17 in the submarine force.

18 I was the Prospective Commanding Officer  
19 Instructor at the time and Everett Kanesty never told  
20 me don't worry about wartime tactics and lower your  
21 standards in the way you operate your submarine. So,  
22 if a guy thinks he's going to get attention, credit,  
23 etcetera for meeting his boss's desires of engagement,  
24 then he's probably going to spend a long time there.

1           My sense is that Commander Waddle spent a lot  
2 of time there because what he liked doing, his  
3 personality did support that he liked doing that kind  
4 of stuff but, two, you know, his boss was interested in  
5 that stuff.

6           So, I think that's why, you know, it appeared  
7 that he seemed to revel in that. One is he hadn't  
8 deployed. He hadn't had an opportunity for his show to  
9 make it's mark in terms of professional performance on  
10 the pointy end of the spear, -- kind of stuff that he  
11 has done and the only way -- and this is just my sense  
12 of what was going on -- is a way for his ship to get  
13 the recognition that he wanted it to get was to support  
14 the Type Commander's initiatives.

15           MR. STRAUCH: Well, if you had a CO who  
16 seemed to take every DV cruise that came his way, how  
17 would you feel about that? Would you say anything one  
18 way or the other?

19           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I would balance that  
20 against the tactical and technical performance. I've  
21 had one guy in my -- and it wasn't a DV cruise -- we  
22 support our ROTC units on the mainland at the  
23 University, so, periodically, my COs will get on an  
24 airplane and fly back there and give a presentation to

1 the midshipmen, etcetera and that's very important that  
2 we do that.

3 But, I had one CO tell me he was getting  
4 ready to go do that and I said, "No you're not going to  
5 do that. You're going to get back on board the ship  
6 and you're going to do your job. You don't have time  
7 to go do this right now, although it's great and I  
8 tasked you to do this a year ago, this is not the right  
9 time to do it. Your focus should be on returning to  
10 the ship.

11 So I could imagine the same discussion  
12 occurring -- you know, when we pick the boat we're  
13 going to do the DV cruise on, or SUBPAC says this is  
14 who we'd like to do it, if I had a vote on that, which  
15 I do, if the guy's training standards weren't up to  
16 where they needed to be --

17 CAPT. THIEMAN: Last week we had the Air War  
18 College from, you know, the Air Force, Air War College  
19 was out here with a bunch of people and the Chief of  
20 Staff called and said, "I need a boat to do this," and  
21 so I gave him the names of the guys that it would most  
22 easily fit into their schedule without any -- and would  
23 also be a good show for the Air College.

24 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That was in port though.

1           CAPT. THIEMAN: Yeah. If we were going to do  
2 something at sea, the same kind of discussions would  
3 occur.

4           MR. STRAUCH: Have you ever had a CO say,  
5 "No. I can't do it now," once you've selected him or  
6 asked him to do it?

7           CAPT. THIEMAN: I can't remember one.

8           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: If you're asking DV  
9 cruise question, we really haven't, just haven't had  
10 any.

11          MR. STRAUCH: Right.

12          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Where that's an issue.

13          CAPT. THIEMAN: But for any kind of a tour.  
14 I mean, sometimes there's -- I know that's happened  
15 that a guy said, "Hey, I'm not the right guy because  
16 I've got this, this and this going on" and I go,  
17 "You're right," and we'll change the ship.

18          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, as a general rule,  
19 I would say probably most boats would rather not do any  
20 of this stuff Because it takes time from doing their  
21 normal routine and they also recognize that really  
22 isn't what determines your reputation in terms of your  
23 performance as Commanding Officer.

24               If your reputation is he does great on DV

1 cruises, that's not the kind of reputation my COs want.

2 They want a reputation that, you know, they're  
3 successful tactically, that they're ship performance is  
4 above the standards and that they have a good  
5 reputation with -- doing a DV cruise takes away from  
6 that, their ability to do that.

7 Now, they want to show off their ship.  
8 There's no doubt about that, but not at the expense of  
9 other things.

10 MR. STRAUCH: Well, knowing that most COs  
11 don't feel about it that way, feel about DV cruises the  
12 way you just described, if you had one CO who felt  
13 differently, how would you react to that CO?

14 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: We'd have a discussion.  
15 I'd say his priorities are --.

16 MR. STRAUCH: Okay.

17 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: But, you know, if he's  
18 doing well and his ship is doing fine, I won't have  
19 that discussion with him because he knows how to  
20 balance his priorities. If he's able to take on the  
21 additional requirement of a DV cruise or a toured board  
22 or whatever and his ship performance is still where it  
23 needs to be, then I'm not going to tell him how to do  
24 his job. If his performance isn't good, if he's in

1     that below average category, then he's not going to  
2     have as much flexibility in making those kinds of  
3     decisions without my involvement.

4             MR. STRAUCH:   Okay.   Tom, do you have any  
5     questions?

6             MR. ROTH-ROFFY:   My name is Tom Roth-Roffy,  
7     for the transcript purposes.   I just have a couple of  
8     questions.   I hope I don't ask questions that are  
9     repetitious or ask for repetition of your previous  
10    answers.   Some of them are follow-up to Barry's  
11    questions.   I guess we'll start with Captain Thieman.  
12    Regarding your responsibility for training of your  
13    crews of the subs in your Squadron, how is that  
14    affected?   I know there are various commands here.   You  
15    have the, I believe it's called the Nasty PAC, Pacific  
16    Training Facility; you have some relationship with  
17    Captain Kyle on the COMSUBPAC Staff.   I believe he runs  
18    the combat certification team or training readiness  
19    evaluation.   How does that all interact to provide  
20    training for the submarine crew?   I'm not sure if --

21            CAPT. THIEMAN:   No, that's okay.   After the  
22    ship comes back from deployment, they have thirty day  
23    stand down and then after that we schedule what we call  
24    a training -- conference and that's where we lay out,

1 from that point all the way to the next deployment,  
2 what are the major events, the training time period and  
3 so the XO, at least in my Squadron, gets with the  
4 Skipper, the Type Commander Staff and my staff and lays  
5 out how he's going to accomplish all the training  
6 requirements. And that's a combination of import  
7 trainers, tactical team trainers, team training,  
8 classroom training, as well as attack centers and going  
9 to sea periods. We have a whole host of at-sea testing  
10 that has to be earned, inspections and hurdles that you  
11 have to cross.

12               So he lays all that out and before he  
13 formally lays out at this conference, they have  
14 dialogued with my staff, so we've given them  
15 suggestions and we've kind of helped them build that  
16 schedule. So it's kind of a chance to lay it out all  
17 publicly and let the Type Commander -- the -- seven  
18 folks that Tom Kyle's guys, also poke holes in it and  
19 make sure that we've covered all our bases and optimize  
20 that training program.

21               And then, as we go through them we execute  
22 each of those import tactical team trainers, classroom  
23 training, whatever various organizations, each of  
24 those: the Navy Training Center, Pacific Instructors,

1 the SCTTG folks, as well we my Squadron staff, then  
2 assess, along with the ship, how each of those events  
3 are going and how it goes into feedback and then there  
4 are other periodic, there's at least one other time  
5 period before we went the -- cycle where the XO gets up  
6 and says, "Okay, here's what our plan was. Now here's  
7 the revisions of the plan based on the latest  
8 assessment and some additional weak areas or some areas  
9 are better and so we're going to maybe not put as much  
10 training in those areas."

11 So it's a very team-oriented approach to  
12 getting that accomplished.

13 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Anything to add Captain  
14 Neiderhauser to that?

15 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The responsibility still  
16 lies with us as Squadron Commander to make sure that  
17 the guys are trained at sea. We mentioned these other  
18 teams that are involved. The Submarine Training  
19 Facility will work in concert with my guys. For  
20 example, I've got to ship the trainers this week.  
21 They're up there for five days and there are  
22 representatives from the Training Facility, the Tier E  
23 Team, and my staff there.

24 So we get the advantage of having the Tier E



1 Team's wider prospective in fleet up there. We get the  
2 advantage of the training facility's guys' expertise,  
3 plus my guys who was riding with me, riding the ships  
4 as far as seven. So that mix together, I think,  
5 provides good feedback for the ship.

6 That's the way it works. And then, at sea,  
7 it's similar. I'll go out to sea and let's say my  
8 Assistant Navigator is alone on one of their ships.  
9 Well, I only have one Assistant Navigator in my  
10 Squadron so I'll call the Combat Assistant Training  
11 Team, or Tier E Team, and ask for one of their guys to  
12 ride with me. So it serves as a manpower pool and also  
13 they provide us additional prospective, a wider  
14 prospective to fleet for us.

15 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: But you, as Squadron  
16 Commander, are overall responsible for the training  
17 level of the submarine crew?

18 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right.

19 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: The other entities assist  
20 you in --

21 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That's right. I don't  
22 look at them as -- when it comes time to say this ship  
23 is trained satisfactorily or not, that's my  
24 responsibility to do that. Clearly, they play a role.

1     The Type Commander's representative will ride with me  
2     underway for some of the tactical exams and has,  
3     basically, a parallel path to my boss. I mean, if he  
4     were to disagree with my assessment, he would tell --  
5     and I'd come in from sea and there'd be a discussion  
6     about that.

7             My approach is I allow them to make a  
8     decision with my team, make a recommendation with me,  
9     before I make my decision. So, ideally, if the Type  
10    Commander's representative that helps me on exams say I  
11    don't recommend certifying this ship, then I would  
12    probably agree with that approach. So that's the way I  
13    would use those guys.

14            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Captain Thieman, another  
15    question -- actually, for both of you, of course -- is:  
16    Before the ship deploys, it has to pass a one week  
17    certification underway period, is that correct?

18            CAPT. THIEMAN: Right.

19            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Pre-overseas movement  
20    certification?

21            CAPT. THIEMAN: Uh-huh.

22            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: What percentage of  
23    submarines that go through that inspection process do  
24    not successfully complete it?

1           CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, that's changed  
2 recently. My Squadron, all seven guys that I deployed  
3 last year all successfully completed that. Several of  
4 the guys, when we got done and before we walked off,  
5 and he said, "Okay, you're sad. Here's the top five  
6 things, in these areas, where you were a little weak,  
7 here are the five things that are the most important  
8 things I think you need to tackle and deal with over  
9 the next, you know, say month and have that they had  
10 left. And then, in one case, we went back to see --  
11 and rode him again.

12           In another case I had, since it was a very  
13 narrow focus issue, I had a guy ride onto Japan to help  
14 verify that, in fact, that it was fully corrected.

15           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: So you sort of gave him a  
16 conditional pass based on them correcting their  
17 weaknesses?

18           CAPT. THIEMAN: No, no, no. It was a full-up  
19 pass. The Skipper was clearly able to fix that one  
20 area himself, but I, in a discussion with him, he asked  
21 for me to provide a guide to help better train him, so  
22 I did that.

23           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: So, basically, I believe  
24 your answer was that none of them have failed --

1 CAPT. THIEMAN: That's right.

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: -- in the history of  
3 Squadron Three, if you could speak in historical terms  
4 percentage of submarines that fail to complete the  
5 certification.

6 CAPT. THIEMAN: I don't know of anybody that  
7 didn't pass it.

8 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Captain Neiderhauser, any  
9 experience with submarines failing to certify?

10 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I deployed one submarine  
11 since I've been here and my approach to that was you're  
12 not going to the -- cert unless you can pass it. So I  
13 rode the ship two times before that -- cert process and  
14 gave them very specific direction: If you don't fix  
15 these problems before the -- cert, then you won't be  
16 passing the -- cert.

17 So there are really two ways to approach  
18 this. You're so close to the deployment date that, if  
19 you go out three weeks before you're supposed to deploy  
20 and then -- cert and say you failed, that has  
21 tremendous implications in terms of supporting the  
22 Fourth Fleet Commanders. But you can't do it that way.

23 CAPT. THIEMAN: But this guy was a non -- guy  
24 and the -- guy -- I certified the guy during his major

1 exercise, when he does his final grading exercise with  
2 the carrier. Well, there was still almost two months  
3 of time before the -- deployed and so he's -- it's sort  
4 of -- it's about like one of his earlier looks from  
5 that ship, but, unfortunately, it's the optimum time to  
6 do the cert so there could be some situations where  
7 you're going to have some things that you want to --  
8 but you've got opportunities to go back to sea again  
9 with that guy and after he comes back from Southern  
10 California to go back to fix those areas successfully.

11 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: There's nothing that  
12 says that the -- cert itself is the only tool that you  
13 use for assessing. So, what I prefer to do is go out  
14 and look hard a couple times ahead of time -- like I  
15 got a guy that's deploying in two months. We just got  
16 off the road for five days last week. I didn't have a  
17 full team, but I had my eyes on the problem with a  
18 handful of guys helping me to work on the big issue  
19 problems that the ship has so that when they get to the  
20 -- cert successfully; a written letter to the CO,  
21 specific areas that are unsat, this week he's in the  
22 attack centers correcting those items and he'll get two  
23 more weeks underway time with my people on board to  
24 make sure they've corrected those before I get back to

1 do the certification.

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Is the certification  
3 basically a pass/fail or is it also average or below  
4 average?

5 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, the way we're  
6 doing it now is you either meet standards or it's below  
7 the standards and that's based on a metric that we've  
8 developed. We're trying to fine tune what it is.

9 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, let's clear it. You're  
10 either sat to deploy or non-sat.

11 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right.

12 CAPT. THIEMAN: But then there's some sub-  
13 areas, if you want to call it that, and then you meet  
14 standards, below standards.

15 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: But you can't deploy a  
16 guy that's below standards in one of the major areas,  
17 so the entering argument is if you're below standards  
18 in one of the key areas, you got to fix that before you  
19 deploy. So a conditional-type thing -- I guess if you  
20 went out and you rode a guy below standards in USW,  
21 let's say. Well, I'm not going to deploy a guy like  
22 that so he's going to have to spend another couple of  
23 weeks correcting those deficiencies before we're ready  
24 to let him go.

1           CAPT. THIEMAN: Subsequent to Greeneville, we  
2   changed the terms here. We used to say average, above  
3   average, below average and it was sat or not. So a guy  
4   could be below average in an area, but you could still  
5   deploy him. You'd come up with a plan that some of  
6   which that the guy may work on while he's on  
7   deployment. But most standards has a different  
8   connotation now to the point where we're going to do an  
9   upgrade and then we're going to reassess before we  
10   deploy.

11           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: On my last guy that  
12   deployed, he came back from sea and he met the  
13   standards in all the areas except for one. I didn't  
14   let him leave until he corrected that deficiency. But  
15   then, below that, there are still deficiencies that the  
16   guy has. In that case what I did was he had to report  
17   to me what his training plan was going to be. Then  
18   when he had finished training on those, assessing the  
19   training was effective.

20           So I let him go with single deficiencies that  
21   were not below standards, but he still got back to me  
22   for his port call to tell me that he had fixed those.  
23   So, even those minor things, I held him accountable to  
24   fix.

1           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Captain Thieman, when you  
2 first started, you characterized your responsibilities  
3 in three areas: people, maintenance and training, I  
4 believe, to my recollection. Could you give us an idea  
5 of how much time percentage-wise you have to devote for  
6 each of these areas, if that's possible. If they could  
7 be considered separate areas or are they so  
8 overlapping?

9           CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, they do overlap.

10          MR. ROTH-ROFFY: For example, maintenance.  
11 Does that really consume a lot of your time as opposed  
12 to the training aspect of your responsibilities,  
13 overseeing the maintenance activities?

14          CAPT. THIEMAN: No, I'd say the training area  
15 is the bigger area of the three. People, regularly we  
16 have at least one meeting a week that discusses the  
17 people and focuses either on one ship or just the  
18 action items and the people area that we have in the  
19 Squadron. Maintenance, we probably have three meetings  
20 a week on that, but training is probably at least that  
21 many meetings for more.

22          MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And you, sir?

23          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I'd probably say it's  
24 seventy percent training, twenty percent material and



1     ten percent personnel. Personnel is not of the  
2     training piece of personnel, but more of just dealing  
3     with discipline problems and those kinds of things.

4             CAPT. THIEMAN: You have a shortage; this  
5     ship's without a Chief in this area. What do we do and  
6     how to get a new guy there, etcetera.

7             MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And there's a new Command, I  
8     believe, that was started a couple of years ago called  
9     a Submarine Support Command?

10            CAPT. THIEMAN: Right.

11            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And you interface with these  
12    folks to do maintenance or is maintenance --

13            CAPT. THIEMAN: They have people that oversee  
14    the shipyard's maintenance for us. They have people  
15    that help work with the Type Commander and  
16    organizations back in the mainland to get us the right  
17    people. They have the medical, legal people that all  
18    work to support us. On the training side, they don't  
19    have a lot of assets to help us there. That's pretty  
20    much our baby.

21            MR. ROTH-ROFFY: You mentioned that you  
22    currently have six submarines in your Squadron,  
23    previously had seven and, I believe, Captain  
24    Neiderhauser said you were going down to five?

1           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right. I have six right  
2 now and I'll go five here by next year.

3           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Historically, how many  
4 submarines have been in these Squadrons here in the  
5 Pacific?

6           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That's a great question  
7 because -- to answer your question, ten to twelve. So  
8 that's --

9           CAPT. THIEMAN: When we were -- that's how  
10 many there were.

11           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That's germane to the  
12 debate, see, because our view is we spend an enormous  
13 amount of time with our ships, our Commanding Officers,  
14 our crews, our wardrooms. Compared to when we were  
15 JOs, we never saw our Squadron. It's very interesting.

16           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: So, and you have the same  
17 staff size on the Squadron, approximately?

18           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: ON the training staff,  
19 you're right, but if you took, like we've divested  
20 ourselves of some of those people that went to NSSC,  
21 but the people we divested were people that don't  
22 really support you on your day-to-day training on ship.

23       But when we got all the logistic guys, -- and those  
24 are all very important to the Squadron and we're

1     debating that in the fleet: Do we still want to do  
2     that? We'll see how it plays out, but it really  
3     doesn't play in on the training side at sea at all  
4     because, like I said, I spend seventy percent on  
5     training.

6             Well, if I took those back, I would spend  
7     more time working on all those other issues that right  
8     now I don't spend much time with. I think that's key  
9     to the whole issue; if you can figure out how is it  
10    that Squadrons play a lesser role fifteen years ago,  
11    ten years ago, than they do now because they just  
12    couldn't. There's no way a Squadron Commander can tell  
13    me that he rides his ships and wants to ride -- out on  
14    twelve submarines. It's impossible. There isn't  
15    enough weeks in a year to do all that. So, I think,  
16    five or six is a good number. Five would be perfect.

17            I've got a guy in the shipyard right now that  
18    will eventually go to another Squadron to balance him  
19    out, to the mainland.

20            CAPT. THIEMAN: That's what my guy is -- m  
21    guy went up to Puget, a Naval Shipyard, and then he's  
22    headed to San Diego because, basically, the ships that  
23    are were going to go to San Diego to keep his Squadron  
24    the same size, the guys are going to Guam so we're each

1 donating a ship to balance it out.

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: We've heard something about  
3 the way inspections and examinations have fallen in  
4 recent years and have become less important. That  
5 you've relied on the ship's crew to do, I don't know if  
6 I'm characterizing this correctly, but to do more of a  
7 Celsius assessment and that maybe now there's a  
8 tendency to go back more towards examinations and  
9 inspections. Do you have any information about that?  
10 Is that official guidance that's coming down from  
11 somewhere?

12 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, specifically, what they  
13 did was the Type Commander reinstituted what he called  
14 Tactical Readiness Exams, which is basically the Combat  
15 Systems Training Teams guys are now one of the hard  
16 looks during the -- exam, during that IDTC period, is  
17 where his guidance comes down. They're the senior  
18 inspector and they take a good look. Whether that's  
19 better or worse, at this point, is a debate because  
20 those guys were -- I mean, they were very focused in  
21 helping us during the course of this.

22 So when I was doing my three or four looks,  
23 they frequently would be part of my team. So I was  
24 helping make sure there was a lot of good and take so

1 we kept out look broad. That we were looking in areas  
2 that they were finding problems on other ships and  
3 other Squadrons. So how much of a difference is it  
4 right now, I don't know yet.

5           The Greeneville has caused us to look maybe a  
6 little bit closer in how much training time, tactical  
7 training time, our boats were really getting and to  
8 maybe reinvigorate us, but caused us to really make  
9 sure that we were getting the quality time in tactical  
10 training that our boats needed.

11           Actually, before the Greeneville happened, we  
12 were already making that discussion of how we were  
13 trying to build more time in, in the fall when I first  
14 took over. So it's kind of a continued process is the  
15 way I see it. Over my two years, we've been constantly  
16 trying to improve the tactical training of our guys.  
17 We went through short turn-arounds. Our guys were  
18 being gone for six months, coming back for twelve and  
19 going right back out again for six.

20           We realized that in that short of a turn-  
21 around, then we didn't get a lot of looks, as many  
22 looks on a ship because you're trying to get the  
23 maintenance done and get all that other stuff in.  
24 There wasn't a lot of tactical training in that twelve

1 months. We've extended it out to sixteen to eighteen  
2 months and a lot of that time we bought, we bought back  
3 as training time and so my guys are better off right  
4 now than they were two years ago before that.

5 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Two years ago we didn't  
6 have a Type Commander inspection on the front-end of  
7 the ship. That's really the only thing that changed.  
8 We've looked at our -- inspections and unchanged  
9 essentially since I've been in the South -- when I  
10 first joined the Navy, we didn't have Tactical  
11 Readiness Exams.

12 Then we went to them for about five or six  
13 year period and then we backed off of that again  
14 thinking that -- the Type Commander's inspection is  
15 what I'm talking about and then we returned to them  
16 again. I think it's the right thing to do. We've  
17 changed names of some of these inspections, but the  
18 bottom line is the Squadron has always been responsible  
19 for one exam, one tactical exam, and the Type  
20 Commander's been responsible for the other and then the  
21 final certification for a ship's deploy was the  
22 Squadron's responsibility.

23 So you had three looks in the deployment  
24 cycle in the old days, got three looks again and then

1 straight --.

2 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay, we're at the end of  
3 this tape. We'll go ahead and switch it.

4 (Whereupon, the parties recessed and the  
5 interview of Captains Thieman and Neiderhauser  
6 subsequently resumed.)

7 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay, this is the start of  
8 Tape 2. We're resuming our interview with Captain  
9 Thieman and Captain Neiderhauser. I just have a couple  
10 more questions and then we'll give it back to Barry to  
11 do the wrap-up. Captain Thieman, are you familiar with  
12 the term ORM, Operational --

13 CAPT. THIEMAN: Risk Management, yes.

14 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: And do you see that playing  
15 a part aboard submarines and how do you see it fitting  
16 in as a formal process?

17 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, I think, one,  
18 Operational Risk Management is sort of like using  
19 common sense when you go into scenarios and situations  
20 and so we've kind of been doing it all along to a  
21 basis. Somebody put a nice turn to it and then had us  
22 focus it in. And, so, we've now trained on it as:  
23 Take a situation and let's talk about the pros -- where  
24 can we get ourselves in trouble on this one. And

1 that's something we should have been doing all along.

2 Every time a submarine goes to sea and every  
3 time it submerges, it's putting itself at risk. That's  
4 why we get extra pay. It's not hazardous duty pay,  
5 but, in a sense, we're going to pay additional money  
6 because there's an extra risk involved in submarining.

7 It's dangerous. Any time we're at sea submerged and  
8 we're coming up, you know, that's when the transition  
9 in the envelope is a risk to our men, and so ORM has  
10 got to play a role in that.

11 Whenever we're operating on the surface,  
12 we're not a surface ship, we're a submarine and when  
13 we're on the surface, ORM has got to play on that  
14 because we get affected differently on surface ships.  
15 So it's something we don't necessarily train  
16 specifically on, but it is a factor in how we do the  
17 evolutions that we do.

18 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The formal Navy  
19 methodology for doing -- I would agree with Captain  
20 Thieman that before it became popular a couple years  
21 ago, the Navy, had been exercising that in the  
22 submarine force. Really, the area that I think to  
23 focus on is at the higher level, the Commanding  
24 Officer's process, you know, risk versus management,



1 managing the risks because, clearly, at a lower level,  
2 you establish procedures, guidelines, for your crew  
3 that allows them to go up to a certain threshold beyond  
4 which, you know, I'm the only guy on the ship that can  
5 accept any more risk than that.

6           So where do our Commanding Officers develop  
7 that skill to be able to look at the risk in any  
8 operation. Whether it going to periscope depth.  
9 Whether it's making a decision to running training on a  
10 ship. And that's tied completely, in my mind, to  
11 experience.

12           So what you got to do is make sure that your  
13 Commanding Officers, as they're going through their  
14 fifteen years of training, from Junior Officer to  
15 Commanding Officer, that they've seen enough different  
16 scenarios, different situations that help them to  
17 recognize the risks of whatever they're getting ready  
18 to do.

19           CAPT. THIEMAN: That gets back to the same  
20 thing when you asked me the question about Scott Waddle  
21 and his previous experience. And, you know, no amount  
22 of just talking about it in a classroom equates to  
23 having experienced years at sea.

24           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: There's really two

1 levels of experience here too. There's the experience  
2 of just doing it the first time or doing it a couple of  
3 times, you're database of experience is built up. But  
4 there's another level of experience is, once you're  
5 doing that event, conducting that operation, going to  
6 periscope depth, if you haven't seen or talked through  
7 the potential problems that can occur to you and if  
8 you're experience base isn't broad enough to recognize  
9 all the bad things that can happen to you, you can't  
10 prepare for that. And I would use -- are you guys  
11 familiar with third Greeneville?

12 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Yeah, a little bit.

13 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Okay. Third  
14 Greeneville, and I don't have all the details on it,  
15 just looking at it from afar falls into that category  
16 of we don't rendezvous with certain ships on the  
17 surface very often and when we do that, the snapshot  
18 that I see is a thousand yards away, a surface ship  
19 line to, submarine line to, and a small boat coming  
20 between the two.

21 When you put yourself in the scenario where  
22 you're driving parallel force a couple hundred yards  
23 away from a big ship like the Ogden, you've now entered  
24 into an area that you've never been before. So you

1 have no experience to draw on when things go bad.

2 So the first step is: Have I ever done it  
3 before? And if you haven't then there's a huge amount  
4 of operational risk with that because when things go  
5 bad, you won't have any experience to call on.

6 The problem with that is there's so many  
7 unforeseen situations for us to analyze and to pull the  
8 string on to see what could go wrong. What are the  
9 trip wires? What are the alternate courses of action?  
10 What could happen to us in our business? Going to  
11 periscope depth is not one of those. We could probably  
12 package that up pretty well and, hopefully, my COs know  
13 how to do that.

14 But there are other events that occur. Some  
15 of them we can't talk about in here, which are high  
16 risk that have a lot of alternate courses that you  
17 could go in and take you to areas that you don't have  
18 any experience in.

19 One of the challenges we've got is to have  
20 the table top that seminar those things with our  
21 Commanding Offices and make sure that they explore some  
22 of those alternate things. We could say, "Hey, let's  
23 go do it in the trainers," but you can't even -- you  
24 can only get to that first level with a trainer. You

1 just can't get the next level of experience.

2 I would just sum it up that there's no  
3 substitute for years at sea because you can't do the  
4 risk management if you don't know what the risk is.

5 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Regarding the ASBADO, the  
6 sonar display that's in the control room that's been  
7 invariably stated as being extremely important and not  
8 so important. If one of your submarines had an ASDO  
9 fail prior to getting underway, would you allow that  
10 submarine to proceed to sea without an ASDO?

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, we built into face  
12 force on our system to where now there's a little  
13 console that we can have the display up on so that  
14 isn't even an issue for that guy, but -- interesting  
15 question. Could you safely operate at sea with the  
16 ASDO? Yes.

17 How are you going to change your procedures  
18 and the way of doing business because it's broke? Is  
19 there any way to take a screen down and -- sonar and  
20 put it back up out in the -- some of our guys have that  
21 ability. It depends on what part's broken. I'm  
22 assuming that whatever broke or failed is unique to the  
23 ASDO so that there's no way to move things around  
24 because they've got four stacks in there --

1           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, they have the old  
2 system ASDO, no ARCE. Well, they did have ARCE IV.

3           CAPT. THIEMAN: They were regular --

4           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Inter-ARCE IV or ARCE  
5 II.

6           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: I'm not sure which level.

7           CAPT. THIEMAN: --

8           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: But that doesn't matter  
9 here --

10          CAPT. THIEMAN: Right.

11          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: -- because they can't  
12 display their broadband on their ARCEs.

13          CAPT. THIEMAN: The answer is yea, but you  
14 got to have procedures and then the question is how  
15 much time interacting CO and Commodore. Is there a  
16 need to be some of that? Yes. And then what are  
17 doing? If what you're going to see is, you know,  
18 supporting something that's important enough or if it's  
19 am I just going out -- is there way I can delay a day -  
20 - you know, there's all kind of discussions that we get  
21 through before we finally send the guy without the  
22 ASDO.

23          CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I mean, there's fault in  
24 the risk manager -- perfectly. Are you going to go out

1 and do an emergency blow -- out of commission. I mean,  
2 wait a second. Was that the plan? I don't know if  
3 that was there plan or not. Apparently, it was because  
4 they had a timeline laid out. If you have to do a DV  
5 cruise, I'd say don't send them. But we have a lot of  
6 ships that -- a little differently than that, so in  
7 their unique case, I would say, no. Fix it first.

8 In the case of some of our other boats where  
9 -- do they have automatic sea --? I don't think they  
10 did.

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: I don't know.

12 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Today we have a plotter  
13 that plots everything that -- tracker on. So you have  
14 a very good display of all data that's at least got a  
15 tracker on it.

16 CAPT. THIEMAN: -- boats during World War II  
17 or up until we had these sonar displays, they didn't  
18 have a sonar display and so, you know, is there a  
19 requirement -- but if we were trying to show these DVs  
20 how you do business, then what you probably do is you  
21 say, okay, well we're not going to do something like  
22 the emergency -- maybe we'll just do a normal -- PD and  
23 they'll see that and we'll surface from that. Yeah,  
24 you're right. There's other ways to get the data now

1 on our ships --

2 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The fact that the ship  
3 didn't have the ASDO -- Officer of the Deck, is not the  
4 driver in my mind and you have to figure all this out,  
5 I guess, but the real issue is: Did you modify your  
6 procedures and practice or do additional things to  
7 ensure that you weren't going to have problems? If you  
8 look at what they did, they went the other direction.  
9 You had your ASDO out of commission and you weren't  
10 more conservative in your approach.

11 CAPT. THIEMAN: Subsequent to Greeneville,  
12 but we've had guys who have done the same evolution,  
13 but they've gone up, not only did they go up and take a  
14 look around for a lot longer period of time than Waddle  
15 did, but they've also broached, they've gone up high-  
16 look, so they get a much better distance view and then  
17 we've had guys even raise their radar and rotated for  
18 enough sweeps to where they got an actual radar  
19 picture. Is that required? Not necessarily, but  
20 depending on the contact situation he saw when he was  
21 up doing his high look, he might like to do it. I  
22 would say if you're going to find -- if you've got some  
23 contacts on the high look, hell, you're not going to do  
24 the evolution. You're going to go off and try

1     someplace else.

2                   CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:   Right.

3                   CAPT. THIEMAN:   But, I mean, those are the  
4     different things and thought processes and those are  
5     all levels -- our guys have instituted subsequent --  
6     some of those guys would have done all of those things  
7     before without a Greeneville; some of them probably  
8     have added it to their baggage.

9                   MR. ROTH-ROFFY:   So have there been any  
10    requirements added to submarines that they have to do  
11    before they can do an emergency blow?  Do they have to  
12    do a broach look?  Is that currently a requirement or  
13    is there any other procedural requirements that have  
14    been placed on them since Greeneville?

15                  CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  -- there's been no  
16    formal procedural requirement change, other than we've  
17    talked about, we trained on it, but, institutionally, I  
18    don't think the mechanism --

19                  CAPT. THIEMAN:   Yeah, I guess, well,  
20    initially we didn't do DV cruises and then that got  
21    rescinded.

22                  CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  Yeah, but his question  
23    is --

24                  CAPT. THIEMAN:   I know.



1           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  -- what is the  
2   requirement for doing emergency --

3           CAPT. THIEMAN:  Oh, the --

4           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  -- separation before the  
5   URO and --

6           CAPT. THIEMAN:  There's no procedure change.

7           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  Right now, as far as we  
8   know and I -- URO itself, which is a non-tactical, it's  
9   an engineering thing, to see if there's been some  
10  changes that have come after that, but I would doubt  
11  that's where it is.

12           MR. ROTH-ROFFY:  Okay.  I think that's about  
13  all I have.  I'll turn it back to Barry.

14           MR. STRAUCH:  Okay, yeah, I just have a few  
15  questions.  Since Greeneville, the February 9<sup>th</sup>  
16  incident, I guess, Greeneville One we're calling it,  
17  Greeneville has had two other incidents and I believe  
18  two other Cos.  Is there a problem with the selection  
19  of COs?

20           CAPT. THIEMAN:  Well, that's something the  
21  Admiral and the Type Commander have been wrestling with  
22  it, then it's kind of above our pay grade.

23           MR. STRAUCH:  Well, if you had your pick of  
24  COs, what qualities would you look for that seem to

1 have been missing in the COs in the incidents that  
2 we're talking about?

3 CAPT. THIEMAN: The subsequent two guys or  
4 Scott?

5 MR. STRAUCH: All three.

6 CAPT. THIEMAN: This kind of relates to one  
7 of the questions we talked about earlier, but all of  
8 our Skippers, like I said, were Type A guys. They're  
9 really strong leaders. We want them to be that way  
10 because they got to be to manage to get all one hundred  
11 and twenty guys focused and get them in the right  
12 direction, operating that ship safely through it's  
13 myriad of complex evolutions and equipment. But we  
14 also want guys who are sensitive to their people and  
15 can recognize how they're doing and be honest in their  
16 self appraisal of their people.

17 So I want guys that are confident in their  
18 capabilities, but I don't want them over confident. I  
19 mean, it's all a question of measure. You want guys  
20 that are receptive to both their people and to outside  
21 organizations as to assessments on their performance so  
22 that they can effect change and are willing, you know,  
23 have a process of continuance improvement on their  
24 ship.

1                   And when you see that, you can live with  
2   different levels of tactical skill if they're receptive  
3   to both their people and organizations.

4                   MR. STRAUCH:   Do you want to answer that?

5                   CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:   Well, I'll ask the  
6   question again.   You asked:   How can we pick our COs  
7   better?

8                   MR. STRAUCH:   Yeah, that and also if you were  
9   picking COs, knowing the incidents that have occurred  
10   to the Greeneville and the COs on the Greeneville, what  
11   changes would you make in what you're looking for in  
12   COs?

13                  CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:   The biggest thing I'm  
14   looking for, and, clearly, I can look at that list of  
15   leadership skills, we could go through those, but those  
16   things that are unique, I think, to a submariner is his  
17   experience base broad enough and I've got my views on  
18   what that entail, but if you guys haven't figured out  
19   yet -- we have a couple problems in the submarine force  
20   in terms of experience.   One is we have two different  
21   classes of submarines.   We have SSNs and SSBNs and  
22   there are common things for most submarines and there's  
23   a lot of common capabilities and skills that they  
24   demonstrate on those ships, but the level of intensity

1 in submarining is less on the SSBNs than on the SSNs.  
2 Now, I haven't heard -- completely on that, but I'm  
3 willing to do that.

4 The second thing is that an officer can spend  
5 a portion of his first two tours in the shipyard.  
6 Those are the most important times to develop those  
7 natural skills you need to be a good -- watcher or  
8 Commanding Officer, so just on that alone and I can  
9 look at a guy's record and tell you just basically  
10 where he was assigned what his skill level is going to  
11 be.

12 So, If I get a new Commanding Officer, that's  
13 the first thing I look at is what is his experience  
14 base? How much time has he really spent at sea? And  
15 make sure I know what those weaknesses are ahead of  
16 time if he's got some holes.

17 But that's probably the biggest thing in  
18 terms of whether the guy is going to be successful or  
19 not. I think there's a direct correlation between  
20 number of years at sea and performances as Commanding  
21 Officer.

22 Now, that theory is probably thrown out the  
23 window on Greeneville Three because we have a guy on  
24 there that we hand-picked that actually has very, very

1 good experience. He was prior listed, had a lot of  
2 time at sea on a large number of ships and that kind of  
3 throws a wrench into this idea.

4 CAPT. THIEMAN: And, obviously, was on a very  
5 successful ships as XO and as an Engineer.

6 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right.

7 MR. STRAUCH: There were, I think, sixteen  
8 DVs on Greeneville on February 9<sup>th</sup>. They were all in  
9 the control room. When you have sixteen people in a  
10 small environment like that who are not involved in the  
11 operation, how does that affect the operation of the  
12 ship?

13 CAPT. THIEMAN: Sixteen people in the control  
14 room doesn't necessarily -- isn't bad.

15 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: The crew's used to  
16 people being in the control room.

17 CAPT. THIEMAN: Battle stations, you have  
18 well more than that. What the critical thing is, is  
19 the key guys who are doing the evolution, how well are  
20 they communicating and exchanging information. And, in  
21 this case, there was obviously some information that  
22 wasn't being exchanged.

23 MR. STRAUCH: In battle stations, the extra  
24 people, are they involved in the operation?

1 CAPT. THIEMAN: Yes.

2 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right, the alignment is  
3 such --

4 CAPT. THIEMAN: You'll have all your stacks  
5 man with people in the fire control system so they're  
6 very involved in placement of the weapon and getting it  
7 ready and analyzing contacts. They're not involved in  
8 the operation of the ship as far as changing -- you've  
9 got your own ship's control --

10 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: If the sixteen people  
11 were just actively distracting, talking to, engaging  
12 the watch team that was on watch, clearly, the people  
13 distracting him -- having sixteen people in the control  
14 room who are quietly standing there doesn't really  
15 distract the watch standers.

16 CAPT. THIEMAN: Now, the spacing out around  
17 the controls such as they get to see different aspects  
18 of what the ship's doing and not impact the ship's  
19 operation.

20 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yes.

21 MR. STRAUCH: Well, there have now been three  
22 incidents involving the Greeneville, have you  
23 participated in any kind of stand down or meeting where  
24 you and other people involved in oversight of the

1 Submarine Force examine what went wrong and what kind  
2 of changes to make since then?

3 CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, we can't totally talk  
4 about the third one because we don't have any official  
5 reports or anything, but after the first two, clearly,  
6 the Type Commander gave us what their assessment was of  
7 what were the issues and what needed -- where the weak  
8 areas were, and, so, as a result, gave us clear tasking  
9 on what we should check on our ships, either chart  
10 audits, for example, in the second, as well as we did  
11 additionally training oversight of our navigation  
12 personnel. On number three, it's too early to say what  
13 all we're going to be doing.

14 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: There's two things here:  
15 one is the specific Greeneville, there's a task --  
16 come out on that, which we are continuing to do --  
17 yeah, we're still revisiting that. We just got a  
18 product delivered to us in the last couple weeks from  
19 there; their Submarine On-Board Training Program that  
20 provides an overview of what happened. The Prosecutive  
21 Commanding Officer Instructor has the brief that --  
22 done and we the task of going over that with our  
23 Commanding Officer. We just got that recently.

24 So that, Greeneville One, continues still to

1 be on the front burner, as well as this is going to be  
2 integrated into some of these collegiate -- briefs that  
3 we do each -- there with the crew.

4 But the other spot in this has been the  
5 driver for the Submarine Force in the way we examine  
6 ourselves and change our culture; whatever we got to do  
7 has been the focus of our attention. Greeneville has  
8 been the focus of our attention in the Submarine Force  
9 for the last year and it continues to be that focus.  
10 It has caused us to look hard at ourselves.

11 We're not done with this. Everything from  
12 the way we select the Commanding Officers to the way we  
13 examine our ships is the Squadron's Support Correct and  
14 we talked about whether we're going to have this Naval  
15 Support Command here in Pearl Harbor or is better to go  
16 back to have those guy's Squadron. We'll examine those  
17 things to see if we're doing this the right way. So we  
18 continue to do things with Greeneville.

19 MR. STRAUCH: There sounds very much like a -  
20 - from the top down. Anything, where anybody above you  
21 has said, "Well, what do you think we could do  
22 differently now to make sure this doesn't happen  
23 again"?

24 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: It's a constant



1     dialogue. I mean, we meet with Admiral Paget weekly.  
2     These issues are a continuing dialogue. We share with  
3     him the things we're doing in our level. We share  
4     those among Squadron Commanders. At the last --  
5     Commander's Conference two months ago -- that's more  
6     now in the fall -- each of us Squadron Commanders  
7     briefed issues we had. Most of the focus was on the  
8     certification process, training, etc., so we had all  
9     the Squadron Commanders, Type Commanders and Senior  
10    Leadership there -- at their level, but, at our level,  
11    this is constant dialogue.

12               MR. STRAUCH: Well, one of the reasons why I  
13    ask that is that if you read the Court of Inquiry and  
14    you read the official -- the one constant is that it's  
15    a CO problem and that by relieving the COs, then you  
16    solve the problem.

17               CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: That's interesting. Is  
18    that what the Court of Inquiry concluded?

19               MR. STRAUCH: Largely.

20               CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Really.

21               MR. STRAUCH: Unless I'm misreading it.

22               CAPT. THIEMAN: Well, let's face it --

23               CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Well, that's not the  
24    Submarine Force's assessment.

1           CAPT. THIEMAN:  -- had the CO relayed some of  
2   his specific decisions where he digressed from the way  
3   we do business, there's a number of things that he  
4   could have done or did do that either caused or  
5   directly related to the cause of the collision or he  
6   would have avoided it.  So, I mean, I can understand  
7   why that -- what we're saying is:  step back and now  
8   look at all the other issues that also came out that  
9   may not be the primary thing that they dealt with and  
10  we're trying to glean all -- I mean, this thing is too  
11  expensive and too costly to us to ever want to do it  
12  again, and so, it's use us with our responsibility as -  
13  - Squadron Commanders to make sure our people lean all  
14  aspects of the --.

15           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER:  There is no doubt in my  
16  mind that the Commanding Officer is the reason why this  
17  ship ran into the other ship.  There is no doubt.  He  
18  had all the tools that he needed to do what he had to  
19  do that thing successfully.

20           This is -- if anything, this is a fairly  
21  minor evolution that he did and he did it wrong, and he  
22  ought to be able to get his ship to periscope depth in  
23  accordance with procedures and do it safely; look  
24  around and make sure there's no ships and no emergency

1 blow to surface.

2           So, maybe the Court Inquiry is correct in  
3 that regard, but that has caused us to at a lot of  
4 other things to say, "Well, it's more than just a CO,  
5 let's get rid of him and we'll move on." It raised a  
6 lot of questions on what we're doing. You got to read  
7 most of those here today. -- we can ship underway like  
8 that. What's the procedure for doing an emergency  
9 blow? How do we certify our trips? How do we train  
10 our ships? Do the standard among the various  
11 Squadrons?

12           MR. STRAUCH: I think I have one more  
13 question: Tactical versus engineering skills in  
14 Prospective Commanding Officers. We've had a  
15 conversation with a Retired Navy Captain that raised  
16 the point that possibly, in the selection process of  
17 Commanding Officers, that engineering skills are given  
18 much more weight than tactical skills. Do either of  
19 you have any comments about this? Whether that's true  
20 or not or no opinion?

21           CAPT. THIEMAN: I would say that's not the  
22 case. If, I mean, nuclear power has been a foundation.  
23 We've learned from the day we enter the Submarine  
24 Force that nuclear power was a very big part of how,

1   you know, operate in that -- plan safely is not just a  
2   Submarine Force requirement, you know, that's a  
3   National requirement, but we've, I mean, every tour  
4   we've been firmly grounded in that nuclear business and  
5   it doesn't change a lot and it's got clear standards  
6   that have been -- since -- there. And so, while that's  
7   very important, it doesn't necessarily have to -- it's  
8   not the stuff the CO has the gut wrenching -- in what  
9   he should do or not because there are books and he can  
10  go to these books and they'll tell him.

11               The stuff that we do tactically with that  
12  ship requires a lot more judgment and that's where we  
13  really focus our attention on in working with our COs.

14   So, you know, Glen and I spend a lot more time with  
15  our COs, going through the tactical what-ifs than we  
16  ever do with the engineering room.

17               CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: I think the only place  
18  where you could even come up with that thought is that  
19  standing a watch as an international watch is different  
20  than standing a watch as an Officer of the Deck. It's  
21  fundamentally different and there's things under the  
22  same standards, procedure compliance and those type  
23  things that you learn -- but there's not a lot of room  
24  for judgment and innovation, if you want to call it

1     that, in the engine room. It's pretty much just the  
2     way it's going to be: executed the way it's written in  
3     the book.

4             You can't do that on the front end of the  
5     ship because you can never create a book thick enough  
6     to be able to cover all the situations. So, what I  
7     think it might hurt us, is not in the selection of  
8     Commanding Officers. I think what it does is it sets  
9     up a Junior Officer when he first comes force in off  
10    the deck to try to do business like he's always done in  
11    the engine room. There are things he wants to bring  
12    forward with him, which make a lot of sense, but  
13    there's a different skill set you need to learn.

14            And, if an Officer doesn't recognize that or  
15    his Commanding Officer or XO don't recognize that and  
16    train that guy to use a different skill set being  
17    Officer of the Deck, then, yeah, maybe you could say  
18    when it comes down to being a CO, that, you know, he's  
19    spend all his time in engineering and developed into  
20    forward end of the ship, but that's a hard one to  
21    qualify.

22            What we normally see is a guy that's a very  
23    successful engineering guy is just as successful as a  
24    tactical, a tact guy. He's a smart guy. He's able to

1 learn quickly.

2 CAPT. THIEMAN: We send strong guys -- the  
3 engineers on the submarines are good guys. They're not  
4 necessarily all in the upper half of department heads,  
5 but they're definitely, you know, upper two-thirds and  
6 they tend to be our better department heads and so they  
7 end up being good ship drivers. And so, naturally, if  
8 they're in that vein of being the number one department  
9 head on board and the CO relies on his OD that they're  
10 going to end up being good XO's and CO's.

11 So, we try to, as a submarine force, we look  
12 very carefully to make sure we're not just -- all the  
13 engineers are going to command, but that we got good  
14 navigators and -- officers are also in command and  
15 making sure that our talent pool is spread out. I  
16 think it's better now than it was when we were JO's. So  
17 there's less of the engineers being are always our best  
18 guys, but we still have to have good guys as engineers.

19 CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Yeah, if I look at -- I  
20 got some CO's that were not engineers and I got some of  
21 my CO's that were and it's a mix. I've got some guys  
22 that are doing really well and some guys aren't doing  
23 as well as the others and it didn't matter which job  
24 they had.

1           MR. STRAUCH: Is it a requirement to become a  
2   Commanding Officer that you served as Chief Engineer on  
3   a submarine?

4           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: No.

5           CAPT. THIEMAN: No.

6           MR. STRAUCH: But it is a requirement that  
7   you served in as a division head or what do you call it  
8   -- as an MPA or something?

9           CAPT. NEIDERHAUSER: Right. The minimum  
10   requirement is that you spent one year as a Nuclear  
11   Division Officer. So, probably you're first year in  
12   the Navy on a submarine you spend a year as an Engineer  
13   or an Engineering Division Officer, then you do some  
14   preparation, basically, self-study, go back to nuclear  
15   reactors and you take an eight hour written exam plus  
16   orals.

17           Once that check is done, your requirement  
18   from that point forward is to maintain your proficiency  
19   as Engineering Officer of Watch, which is two times of  
20   the month. Yeah, you have to stand watch two times a  
21   month and you do that until you're an XO. So you have  
22   to keep your fingers in back there a little bit to  
23   maintain your proficiency.

24           MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay, I think that pretty

1 much wraps up our interview. We'd like to thank you  
2 both very much for coming down and we appreciate your  
3 time.

4 (Whereupon, the interview of Captain Thieman  
5 and Captain Neiderhauser concluded.)